Q. HORATII FLACCI

ARS POETICA.

EPISTOLA ad PISONES.

With an Engliſh

COMMENTARY

AND

NOTES.

LONDON,
Printed by *W. Bowyer*,
And ſold by R. DODSLEY in Pall-mall, and
M. COOPER in Paternoſter-Row.
MDCCXLIX.

INTRODUCTION.

WHENEVER a work of the *preceptive* kind on any art hath acquired ſuch a degree of credit, as to become a *rule* and guide to the profeſſors of it, the public, for a very obvious reaſon, at leaſt the friends and well-wiſhers of that *art*, have an intereſt to ſee, that it be juſtly and accurately underſtood. The EPISTLE to the PISOS hath long held this high rank in the province of poetry; where its authority hath been unqueſtioned, and its ſentence conſtantly ſubmitted to, as deciſive, in all queſtions, in which it could have any concern. It appeared then to the writer of theſe ſheets, that it might be of uſe, if, in the opportunities of his leiſure, he employed ſome pains in clearing the ſenſe, connecting the method, and aſcertaining the ſcope and purpoſe, of this admired epiſtle. Others, he knew indeed, and ſome, of the firſt fame for critical erudition, had been before him in this attempt. Yet he did not find himſelf prevented by their labours; in which, beſides innumerable leſſer faults, he, more eſpecially, obſerved two inveterate errors, of ſuch a ſort, as muſt needs perplex the genius, and diſtreſs the learning of *any* commentator. The *one* of theſe reſpects the SUBJECT; the other, the METHOD of the *Art of*

Poetry. It will be neceſſary to ſay ſomething upon each.

1. That the *art of poetry*, at large, is not, properly, the ſubject of this piece, is ſo glaringly apparent, that it hath not eſcaped the dulleſt and leaſt attentive of its critics[a]. For, however all the different *kinds* of poetry might appear to enter into it, yet every one ſaw, that *ſome* at leaſt were very ſlightly conſidered: whence the frequent attempts, the *artes et inſtitutiones poeticæ*, of writers both at home and abroad, to ſupply its deficiencies. But, though this was ſeen and confeſs'd, it unluckily happened, that the ſagacity of his numerous commentators went no farther. They ſtill conſidered it as a *collection*, though not a *ſyſtem*, of criticiſms on poetry in general; with this further conceſſion however, that the ſtage had evidently the largeſt ſhare in it. Under the influence of this prejudice, ſeveral writers of name took upon them to comment and explane it. And their ſucceſs was juſt what might be expected from ſo fatal a miſtake on ſetting out, as the not ſeeing, "that the proper and ſole purpoſe of the author, "was, not to abridge the Greek critics, whom he

[a] I muſt except, perhaps, NICOLAUS COLONIUS, a learned Italian of the XVI century, who, after having, as he aſſures us, carefully and with a faſtidious kind of diligence, inſpected the method, and weighed every ſingle precept, of this poem, was brought at length, by the force of a more than ordinary labour and attention of thought, to this peculiar concluſion, *Horatium univerſam vim Poeticæ facultatis, quam ipſe magnus in primis Poeta, et magnis excultus doctrinis, animo comprehenſam tenebat, in hoc libello ad Piſones, quantum lex carminis pateretur, explicare voluiſſe.*

"probably

" probably never thought of, nor to amuſe " himſelf with compoſing a ſhort critical ſyſtem, " for the general uſe of poets, which every line of " it abſolutely confutes; but, ſimply to criticize " the Roman drama;" to which end, not the tenor of the work only, but, as will appear, every ſingle precept in it, ultimately refers. The miſchiefs of this original error have been long felt. It hath occaſioned a conſtant perplexity in defining the general method, and in fixing the import of *particular* rules. Nay its effects have reached ſtill farther. For, under the opinion of the whole being compoſed out of the Greek critics, the labour and ingenuity of its interpreters have been miſemployed in picking out authorities, which were not wanted, and in producing, or, more properly, by their abſurd refinements, in *creating* conformities, which were never deſigned. Whence it hath come to paſs, that, inſtead of inveſtigating the order of the poet's own reflexions, and ſcrutinizing the peculiar ſtate of the Roman ſtage (the methods, which common ſenſe and common criticiſm would preſcribe) the world hath been nauſeated with inſipid lectures on *Ariſtotle* and *Phalereus*, whoſe ſolid ſenſe hath been ſo attenuated and ſubtilized by the delicate operation of French *critique*, as hath even gone ſome way towards bringing the *art* itſelf into diſrepute.

2. But not the miſconception of the *ſubject* only, but an inattention to the METHOD of it, hath occaſioned much obſcurity in this poem. The *latter* was, in part, the genuin conſequence of the *former*. For, not ſuſpecting an unity of deſign in the ſubject, its interpreters never looked

for, or could never find, a conſiſtency of diſpoſition in the method. And this was indeed the very block upon which HEINSIUS, and, before him, JULIUS SCALIGER himſelf ſtumbled. Theſe illuſtrious critics, with all the force of genius, which is required to diſembarraſs an involved ſubject, and all the aids of learning, that can lend a ray to enlighten a dark one, have, notwithſtanding, found themſelves utterly unable to unfold the order of this epiſtle; inſomuch, that the *one* [a], hath boldly pronounced the conduct of it to be *vicious*; and the *other*, as aſſenting to the juſtice of the charge, hath, in order to evade it, been even driven to the unprecedented and uncritical expedient of a licentious tranſpoſition. The miſtake of both was this, that they apprehended, the poet's purpoſe had been to write a criticiſm of the art of poetry at large, and not, as is here ſhewn, of the Roman drama in particular. Though the blunder of HEINSIUS was perhaps ſomething more. For, as will be made appear in the notes on particular places, this critic did not pervert the order of the piece, from only a ſimple inapprehenſion of the drift of the ſubject, but alſo as he was unconſcious of the genuin charm and beauty of the *epiſtolary method*. For, though there be indeed, as hath [b] been obſerved, *all the looſeneſs and inconnection in the art of poetry, which the nature of the compoſition would indulge*, yet it is to miſtake, as well the dictates of common ſenſe, as the intention of that great writer, to think that no method at all is uſed in it. And, becauſe I take this to

[a] Præf. in LIB. POET. et l. vi p. 338.
[b] Comment. on the Eſſay on Crit. p. 2 Ed. 4to.

be

be a principal reaſon of all the wrong explications, that have been given of this, as well as the other epiſtles of Horace; and it is, in itſelf, a point of curious criticiſm, of which little or nothing hath been ſaid by any good writer, I will take the liberty to enlarge a little upon it.

THE EPISTLE, however various its appearances may be, is, in fact, but of *two* kinds; *one* of which may be called the DIDACTIC; the *other*, the ELEGIAC epiſtle. By the *firſt* I mean all thoſe epiſtles, whoſe end is to *inſtruct*; whether the ſubject be *morals*, *politics*, *criticiſm*, or, in general, *human life:* by the *latter*, all thoſe, whoſe end is to *move*; whether the occaſion be *love*, *friendſhip*, *jealouſy*, or other private diſtreſſes. If there are ſome of a lighter kind in Horace, and other good writers, which are not reducible to either of theſe two claſſes, they are to be regarded only, as the triflings of their pen, and deſerve not to be conſidered, as making a *third* and diſtinct ſpecies of this poem.

Now theſe two kinds of the *epiſtle*, as they differ widely from each other in their *ſubject* and *end*, ſo do they likewiſe in their *original:* though both *flouriſhed* at the ſame time, and are both wholly *Roman*.

I. The former, or DIDACTIC epiſtle, was, in fact, the true and proper offſpring of the SATIRE. It will be worth while to reflect how this happened. *Satire*, in its origin, was a mere extemporaneous jumble of mirth and ill-nature. ENNIUS civilized both, but left it without form or method; it being only, in his hands, a rhapſody of poems on different ſubjects, and in different meaſures. Common ſenſe diſclaiming the extrava-

gance of this heterogenous mixture, LUCILIUS advanced it, in its next ſtep, to an unity of *deſign* and *metre* [d]; which was ſo conſiderable a change, that it procured him the high appellation of INVENTOR of this poem. Little now remained for HORACE

[d] When I ſay, that Lucilius introduced into ſatire *an unity of metre*, I mean only, in *the ſame piece*; for the meaſure in different ſatires was very different. That the *deſign* in him was *one* muſt needs be concluded. 1. Becauſe Horace, who cenſures Lucilius with great ſeverity, never objects to him the abſurdity of a miſcellaneous argument. 2. Becauſe Horace expreſly informs us, that the *form or kind of writing* in the ſatires of Lucilius was exactly the ſame with *that* in his own; in which, whatever becomes of the *epiſtles*, no one will pretend, that there is the leaſt appearance of that rhapſodical, detached form, which made the character of the *old ſatire*. 3. Becauſe, on any other ſuppoſition, it does not appear, what could give Lucilius a claim to that high appellation of INVENTOR of this poem. That he was the *firſt*, who copied the manner of the *old comedy* in ſatire, could never be ſufficient for this purpoſe. For all, that he derived into it from thence, was, as Quinctilian ſpeaks, *libertas atque inde acerbitas et abunde ſalis*. It ſharpened his *invective*, and poliſhed his *wit*, that is, it improved, but did not alter the *form* of the ſatire. As little can a right to this title be pleaded from the *uniformity of meaſure*, which he introduced into it. For *this*, without an *unity of deſign*, is ſo far from being an alteration for the better, that it even heightens the abſurdity; it being ſurely more reaſonable to adapt different meaſures to different ſubjects, than to treat a number of inconnected and quite different ſubjects in the very *ſame* meaſure. When therefore Horace tells us, that Lucilius was the *Inventor* of the ſatire, it muſt needs be underſtood, that he was the FIRST, who, from its former disjointed ſtate, reduced it into a regular conſiſtent poem, having one main end or *deſign*, as well as written in one *meaſure*.

HORACE but to poliſh and refine. His only material alteration was, that he appropriated to the ſatire *one*, that is, the heroic metre.

From this ſhort hiſtory of the ſatire we collect, 1. that its deſign was *one:* And 2. we learn, what was the general form and caſt of its compoſition. For, ariſing out of a looſe, disjointed, miſcellany, its method, when moſt regular, would be free and unconſtrained; nature demanding ſome chain of connection, and a reſpect to its origin requiring that connection to be ſomewhat concealed. But not its origin only, but *aim*, exacted this. For being, as Diomedes obſerves, *archææ comœdiæ charactere compoſitum*, "profeſſedly written after "the manner of the old comedy", it was of courſe to admit the familiarity of the comic muſe; whoſe genius is averſe from all conſtraint of method, ſave that only which a natural, ſucceſſive train of thinking unavoidably draws along with it. And this, by the way, accounts for the dialogue air, ſo frequent in the Roman ſatire, as likewiſe for the looſer numbers which appeared ſo eſſential to the grace of it. It was in learned alluſion to this comic genius of the ſatire, that Mr. Pope hath juſtly characterized it in the following manner:

"Horace ſtill charms with graceful negligence,
"And, without method, TALKS us into ſenſe.

2. It being now ſeen, what was the real form of the *ſatire*, nothing, it is plain, was wanting, but the application of a particular addreſs, to conſtitute the *didactic epiſtle:* the ſtructure of this poem, as preſcribed by the laws of nature and good ſenſe, being in nothing different from that of the *other*. For here 1. an *unity* of ſubject or deſign

ſign is indiſpenſably neceſſary, the freedom of a miſcellaneous matter being permitted only to the familiar letter. And 2. not profeſſing *formally* to inſtruct (which alone juſtifies the ſeverity of ſtrict method) but, when of the graveſt kind, in the way of addreſs only to *inſinuate* inſtruction, it naturally takes an air of negligence and inconnection, ſuch as we have before ſeen eſſential to the ſatire. All which is greatly confirmed by the teſtimony of *one*, who could not be uninformed in theſe matters. In addreſſing his friend on the object of his ſtudies, he ſays

ſive
Liventem ſatiram *nigra rubigine turpes*,
Seu tua NON ALIA *ſplendeſcat* epiſtola CURA.
[Stat. L. i. Sylv. Tiburt. M. V.]

plainly intimating, that the rules and labour of compoſition were exactly the ſame in theſe two poems [a].

3. The general form and ſtructure of *this* epiſtle being thus clearly underſtood, it will now be eaſy, in few words, to deduce the peculiar laws of its compoſition.

And 1. it cannot wholly diveſt itſelf of all method: For, having only one point in view, it muſt of courſe purſue it by ſome kind of connection. The progreſs of the mind in rational thinking requires this, which never breaks the chain entirely, even in its freeſt excurſions.

2. As there muſt needs be a *connection*, ſo *that connection* will beſt anſwer to its end and the pur-

[a] The critics on *Statius*, not apprehending this identity, or exact correſpondence between the *ſatire* and *epiſtle*, have abſurdly, and without warrant, altered the text from ALIA into ALTA.

poſe

poſe of the writer, which, whilſt it leads, by a ſure train of thinking, to the concluſion in view, conceals itſelf all the while, and leaves to the reader the ſatisfaction of ſupplying the intermediate links, and joining together, in his own mind, what is left in a ſeeming poſture of neglect and inconnection. The art of furniſhing this gratification, ſo reſpectful to the ſagacity of the reader, without putting him to the trouble of a painful inveſtigation, is what conſtitutes the ſupreme charm and beauty of EPISTOLARY METHOD.

II. What hath hitherto been advanced reſpects chiefly the *didactic* form. It remains to ſay ſomething of that other *ſpecies* of the epiſtle, the ELEGIAC; which, as I obſerved, had quite another *original*. For this apparently ſprung up from what is properly called the *Elegy*: a poem of very antient Greek extraction: naturally ariſing from the plaintive, querulous humour of mankind; which, under the preſſure of any grief, is impatient to break forth into wailings and tender expoſtulations, and finds a kind of relief in indulging and giving a looſe to that flow of ſorrow, which it hath not ſtrength or reſolution wholly to reſtrain. This is the account of the *Elegy* in its proper Greek form; a negligent, inconnected, abrupt ſpecies of writing, perfectly ſuited to an indolent diſpoſition and paſſionate heart. Such was OVID's; who, taking advantage of this character of the elegy, contrived[c] a new kind of poetry, without the ex-

[c] *Vel tibi compoſita cantetur* EPISTOLA *voce*;
IGNOTUM HOC ALIIS ILLE NOVAVIT OPUS.
ART. AMAT. L. iii. ℣ 345.

pence

pence of much invention, or labour to himſelf. For collecting, as it were, thoſe ſcattered hints, which compoſed the elegy, and directing them to one principal view; and ſuperadding a perſonal addreſs, he became the author of what is here ſtyled the *Elegiac* epiſtle; beautiful models of which we have in his HEROIDES, and the *Epiſtles from* PONTUS. We ſee then the difference of *this* from the *didactic* form. They have both one principal end and point in view. But the *Didactic*, being of a cooler and more ſedate turn, purſues its deſign uniformly and connects eaſily. The *Elegiac*, on the contrary, having *emotion* to effect, not *inſtruction*, hath all the abruptneſſes of irregular diſordered paſſion. It catches at remote and diſtant hints, and ſtarts at once into a digreſſive train of thinking, which it requires ſome degree of enthuſiaſm in the reader to follow.

Farther than this it is not material to my preſent deſign to purſue this ſubject. More exact ideas of the form and conſtitution of this epiſtle, muſt be ſought in that beſt example of it, the natural Roman poet. It may only be obſerved of the different qualities, neceſſary to thoſe, who aſpire to excel in theſe *two* ſpecies; that, as the *one* would make an impreſſion on the *heart*, it can only do this by means of an exquiſite *ſenſibility of nature and elegance of mind*; and that the *other*, attempting in the moſt inoffenſive manner, to inform the *head*, muſt demand, to the full accompliſhment of its purpoſe, *ſuperior good ſenſe*, *the wideſt knowledge of life*, and, above all, *the politeneſs of a conſummate addreſs*. That the *former* was the characteriſtic of OVID's genius hath been obſerved, and is well known.

known. How far the *latter* deſcription agrees to HORACE can be no ſecret to thoſe of his readers, who have any ſhare, or conception of theſe talents themſelves. But matters of this *nicer* kind are properly the objects, not of *criticiſm*, but of *ſentiment*. Let it ſuffice then to examine the poet's practice, ſo far only, as we are enabled to judge of it by the ſtandard of the preceding rules.

III. Theſe rules are reducible to *three*. 1. *that there be an unity in the ſubject*. 2. *a connection in the method:* and 3. *that ſuch connection be eaſy*. All which I ſuppoſe to have been religiouſly obſerved in the poet's conduct of *this*, i. e. the *didactic* epiſtle. For,

[1.] The *ſubject* of each epiſtle is one: that is, one ſingle point is proſecuted through the whole piece, notwithſtanding that the addreſs of the poet, and the delicacy of the ſubject may ſometimes lead him through a devious track to it. Had his interpreters attended to this practice, ſo conſonant to the rule of nature before explained, they could never have found *an art of poetry* in the epiſtle, we are about to examine [a].

[2.] This one point, however it hath not been ſeen [b], is conſtantly purſued by an uniform, conſiſtent *method*; which is never more artificial, than

[a] If ever the great poet wrote at random, the almoſt unanimous ſuffrage of the learned will teſtify, that it was in this epiſtle. And yet I preſume to give even *this*, as an example to the *three* rules here delivered; and which, according to my ideas of the matter, muſt always concur in every piece, pretending to that name.

[b] J. Scaliger ſays, *Epiſtolas, Græcorum more, Phocyllidæ atque Theognidis* [Horatius] *ſcripſit: præceptis philoſophiæ divulſis minimeque inter ſe cohærentibus.*

when

when leaſt apparent to a careleſs, inattentive reader. This ſhould have ſtimulated his learned critics to have ſought the connection of the poet's own ideas, when they magiſterially ſet themſelves to tranſpoſe or vilify his method.

[3.] This method is every where ſufficiently *clear and obvious*; proceeding if not in the ſtricteſt forms of *diſpoſition*, yet, in an eaſy, elegant progreſs, one hint ariſing out of another, and inſenſibly giving occaſion to ſucceeding ones, juſt as the cooler genius of this *kind* required. This, laſtly, ſhould have prevented thoſe, who have taken upon themſelves to criticize *the art of poetry* by the laws of *this* poem, from concealing their ignorance of its real views under the cover of ſuch abrupt and violent tranſitions, as might better agree to the impaſſioned *elegy*, than to the ſedate *didactic epiſtle*.

To ſet this three-fold character, in the fulleſt light, before the view of the reader, I have attempted to explane the *Epiſtle to the Piſos*, in the way of continued commentary upon it. And even *this*, that the cohærence of the ſeveral parts may be the more diſtinctly ſeen, is rendered as conciſe as poſſible; ſome of the finer and more obvious connections being purpoſely obſerved and drawn out in the notes.

For the *kind* of interpretation itſelf, it muſt be allowed, of all others, the fitteſt to throw light upon a difficult and obſcure ſubject, and, above all, to convey an exact idea of the ſcope and order of any work. It hath, accordingly, been ſo conſidered by ſeveral of the foreign, particularly, the ITALIAN, critics; who have eſſayed long ſince to illuſtrate, in this way, the very piece before us. But their *ſucceſs* is, I am ſenſible, a ſlender recommendation of

of their *method*. I chuſe therefore to reſt on the *ſingle* authority of a great author, who hath not diſdained to comment a like piece of a late critical poet. What was indeed the amuſement of his pen, becomes, it muſt be owned, the *labour* of inferior writers. Yet, on theſe unequal terms, it can be no diſcredit to have aim'd at ſome reſemblance of one of the leaſt of thoſe *merits*, which ſhed their united honours on the name of the illuſtrious *friend* and *commentator* of Mr. POPE.

F. Rayman inv. & del. C. Grignion Sculp.

Q. HORATII FLACCI

ARS POETICA

EPISTOLA AD PISONES.

HUMANO capiti cervicem pictor equinam
Jungere ſi velit, & varias inducere plumas
Undique collatis membris, ut turpiter atrum
Deſinat in piſcem mulier formoſa ſuperne;

COMMENTARY.

THE ſubject of this piece being, as I ſuppoſe, *one*, viz. *the ſtate of the Roman Drama*, and common ſenſe requiring, even in the freeſt forms of compoſition, ſome kind of *method*, the intelligent reader will not be ſurprized to find the proſecution of this *one* ſubject, reſolving itſelf into a regular, well-ordered plan, which, for the more exact deſcription of it, I diſtinguiſh into three parts:

Spectatum admiſſi riſum teneatis amici?
Credite, Piſones, iſti tabulae fore librum
Perſimilem, cujus, velut aegri ſomnia, vanae
Fingentur ſpecies; ut nec pes, nec caput uni
Reddatur formae. Pictoribus atque poetis
Quidlibet audendi ſemper fuit aequa poteſtas:
Scimus, & hanc veniam petimuſq. damuſq. viciſſim:
Sed non ut placidis coeant inmitia; non ut
Serpentes avibus geminentur, tigribus agni.

COMMENTARY.

I. The firſt of them [from ℣ 1 to 89] is preparatory to the main ſubject of the epiſtle, containing ſome general rules and reflexions on poetry, but principally with an eye to the following parts: by which means it ſerves as an uſeful introduction to the poet's deſign, and opens with that air of eaſe and negligence, eſſential to the epiſtolary form.

II. The main body of the epiſtle [from ℣ 89 to 295] is laid out in regulating the *Roman* ſtage; but chiefly in giving rules for tragedy; not only as that was the ſublimer ſpecies of the *Drama*, but, as it ſhould ſeem, leſs cultivated and underſtood.

III. The laſt part [from ℣ 295 to the end] exhorts to care and diligence in writing; and is taken up partly in removing the cauſes, that prevented it, and partly in directing to the uſe of ſuch means, as might ſerve to promote it. Such is the general plan of the epiſtle. In order to enter fully into it, it will be neceſſary to trace the poet, attentively, through the elegant connexions of his own method.

PART I.

General reflexions on poetry.

THE epiſtle begins [to ℣ 9] with that general and fundamental precept of preſerving an unity in the ſubject and the diſpoſition of the piece. This is further explained by defining the uſe, and fixing the character of *poetic licence* [from ℣ 9 to 13] which unſkillful writers often plead in defence

Inceptis gravibus plerumque & magna profeſſis
Purpureus, late qui ſplendeat, unus & alter
Adſuitur pannus: cum lucus, & ara Dianae,
Et properantis aquae per amoenos ambitus agros,
Aut flumen Rhenum, aut pluvius deſcribitur arcus.
Sed nunc non erat his locus: & fortaſſe cupreſſum
Scis ſimulare: quid hoc, ſi fractis enatat exſpes
Navibus, aere dato qui pingitur? amphora coepit
Inſtitui, currente rota, cur urceus exit?
Denique ſit quidvis; ſimplex dumtaxat & unum.
Maxima pars vatum, pater & juvenes patre digni,
Decipimur ſpecie recti. Brevis eſſe laboro,
Obſcurus fio: ſectantem lenia nervi
Deficiunt animique: profeſſus grandia turget:
Serpit humi tutus nimium timiduſque procellae:
Qui variare cupit rem prodigialiter unam,
Delphinum ſilvis adpingit, fluctibus aprum.

COMMENTARY.

fence of abſurd tranſgreſſions againſt the law of UNITY. To ℣ 23 is conſidered and expoſed that particular violation of *uniformity*, into which young poets eſpecially are apt to run, ariſing from frequent and ill-timed deſcriptions. Theſe, however beautiful in themſelves, and with whatever maſtery they may be executed, yet, if foreign to the ſubject, and incongruous to the place, where they ſtand, are extremely impertinent: a caution, the more neceſſary, as the miſtake itſelf ariſes [from ℣ 23 to 25] from an ambition of being right. There are two caſes, in which this *ambition* remarkably miſleads us. The *firſt* is, when it tempts us to puſh an *acknowledged beauty* too far. Great beauties are always in the confines of great faults; and therefore, by aiming at ſuperior excellence, we are eaſily carried into abſurdity. Thus [from ℣ 25 to 30] *brevity* is

In vitium ducit culpae fuga, ſi caret arte.
Aemilium circa ludum faber, unus & unguis
Exprimet, & mollis imitabitur aere capillos;
Infelix operis, ſumma: quia ponere totum
Neſciet. hunc ego me, ſi quid componere curem,
Non magis eſſe velim; quam naſo vivere pravo,
Spectandum nigris oculis nigroque capillo.

COMMENTARY.

often *obſcurity*; *ſublimity*, *bombaſt*; *caution*, *coolneſs*; and, to come round to the point, a fondneſs for *varying and diverſifying a ſubject*, by means of epiſodes and deſcriptions, ſuch as are mentioned above [℣ 15] will often betray a writer into that capital error of violating the *unity* of his piece. For, though variety be a real excellence under the conduct of true judgment, yet, when affected beyond the bounds of probability, and brought in ſolely to *ſtrike* and *ſurprize*, it becomes unſeaſonable and abſurd. The ſeveral epiſodes or deſcriptions, intended to give that variety, may be inſerted in improper places; and then the abſurdity is as great, as that of the painter, who, according to the illuſtration of ℣ 19, 20, introduced a cypreſs into a ſea-piece, or, according to the illuſtration of the preſent verſe, who paints a dolphin in a wood, or a boar in the ſea.

2. Another inſtance, in which we are miſled by an *ambition of attaining to what is right*, is, when, through an exceſſive fear of committing faults, we diſqualify ourſelves for the juſt execution of a *whole*, or of ſuch *particulars*, as are ſuſceptible of real beauty. For not the affectation of ſuperior excellencies only, but even

In vitium ducit culpæ fuga, *ſi caret arte.*

This is aptly illuſtrated by the caſe of a ſculptor; whoſe overſcrupulous diligence to finiſh ſingle and trivial parts in a ſtatue, which, when moſt exact, are only not faulty, leaves him utterly incapable of doing juſtice to the more important members, and, above all, of deſigning and completing

Sumite materiam veſtris, qui ſcribitis, aequam
Viribus; & verſate diu, quid ferre recuſent,
Quid valeant humeri. cui lecta potenter erit res,
Nec facundia deſeret hunc, nec lucidus ordo.
Ordinis haec virtus erit & venus, aut ego fallor;
Ut jam nunc dicat jam nunc debentia dici,
Pleraque differat & praeſens in tempus omittat.
Hoc amet, hoc ſpernat, promiſſi carminis auctor.

COMMENTARY.

pleting a *whole* with any degree of perfection. But this latter is commonly the defect of a minute genius; who, having taken in hand a deſign, which he is by no means able to execute, naturally applies himſelf to labour and finiſh thoſe parts, which he finds are within his power. It is of conſequence therefore [from ℣ 38 to 40] for every writer to be well informed of the nature and extent of his own talents: and to be cautious in chuſing a ſubject, which is, in all its parts, proportioned to his ſtrength and ability. Beſides, from ſuch an attentive ſurvey of his ſubject, and of his capacity to treat it, there will alſo reſult to him theſe further advantages [℣ 41] 1. That he cannot be wanting in a proper fund of matter, wherewith to inlarge under every head: nor, 2. can he fail, by ſuch a well-weighed choice, to diſpoſe of his ſubject in the beſt and moſt advantagious method. Eſpecially, as to the latter, which is the principal benefit, he will perceive [to ℣ 45] where it will be uſeful to preſerve, and where to change, the natural order of his ſubject, according as it may beſt ſerve to anſwer the ends of poetry.

Thus far ſome general reflexions concerning *poetical diſtribution*; principally, as it may be affected by falſe notions, 1. Of *poetic licence* [℣ 10] and, 2. Of *poetic perfection* [℣ 25.] But the ſame cauſes will equally affect the *language*, as *method*, of poetry. To theſe then are properly ſubjoined ſome directions about the *uſe of words*. Now this

In verbis etiam tenuis cautuſque ſerendis,
Dixeris egregie, notum ſi callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum. ſi forte neceſſe eſt
Indiciis monſtrare recentibus abdita rerum;
Fingere cinctutis non exaudita Cethegis
Continget: dabiturque licentia ſumta pudenter.
Et nova factaque nuper habebunt verba fidem; ſi
Graeco fonte cadent, parce detorta. quid autem?
Caecilio Plautoque dabit Romanus, ademtum
Virgilio Varioque? ego cur adquirere pauca,
Si poſſum, invideor? quum lingua Catonis & Enni
Sermonem patrium ditaverit, & nova rerum

COMMENTARY.

this particular depending ſo entirely on what is out of the reach of rule, as the faſhion of the age, the taſte of the writer, and his knowledge of the language, in which he writes, the poet only gives directions about *new words*; or, ſince every language is neceſſarily imperfect, about the *coining of ſuch words*, as the writer's neceſſity or convenience may demand. And here, after having preſcribed [l. 46] a great *caution* and *ſparingneſs* in the thing itſelf, he obſerves, 1. [to l. 49] That where it ought to be done, the better and leſs offenſive way will be, not to coin a *word* entirely new (for this is ever a taſk of ſome envy) but, by means of an ingenious and happy poſition of a well-known word, in reſpect of ſome others, to give it a new air, and caſt. Or, if it be neceſſary to *coin new words*, as it will be in ſubjects of an abſtruſe nature, and eſpecially ſuch, as were never before treated in the language, that then, 2. [to l. 54] this liberty is very allowable; but that the reception of them will be more eaſy, if we borrow them from a language, as the Greek, already known, and approved. And, to obviate the prejudices of over-ſcrupulous critics on this head, he goes on [from l. 54 to l. 73] in a vein of popular

Nomina protulerit. licuit, ſemperque licebit
Signatum praeſente nota procudere nummum.
Ut ſilvis folia privos mutantur in annos;
Prima cadunt: ita verborum vetus interit aetas,
Et juvenum ritu florent modo nata vigentque.
Debemur morti nos, noſtraque: ſive receptus
Terra Neptunus claſſis Aquilonibus arcet,
Regis opus; ſteriliſve palus prius aptaque remis
Vicinas urbis alit, & grave ſentit aratrum:
Seu curſum mutavit iniquum frugibus amnis,
Doctus iter melius: mortalia cuncta peribunt;
Nedum ſermonum ſtet honos, & gratia vivax.
Multa renaſcentur, quae jam cecidere; cadentque,
Quae nunc ſunt in honore vocabula: ſi volet uſus,
Quem penes arbitrium eſt, & jus, & norma loquendi.
Res geſtae regumque ducumque, & triſtia bella
Quo ſcribi poſſent numero, monſtravit Homerus.
Verſibus inpariter junctis querimonia primum,
Poſt etiam incluſa eſt voti ſententia compos.
Quis tamen exiguos elegos emiſerit auctor,
Grammatici certant, & adhuc ſub judice lis eſt.

COMMENTARY.

pular illuſtration, to alledge, in favour of this liberty, the examples of antient writers, and the vague, unſteddy nature of language itſelf.

From theſe reflexions on poetry, at large, he proceeds now to *particulars*: the moſt obvious of which being the different *forms and meaſures* of poetic compoſition, he conſiders, in this view [from ℣ 75 to 86] the four great ſpecies of poetry, to which all others may be reduced, *the Epic*,

Archilochum proprio rabies armavit iambo.
Hunc ſocci cepere pedem grandeſque cothurni,
Alternis aptum ſermonibus, & popularis
Vincentem ſtrepitus, & natum rebus agendis.
Muſa dedit fidibus Divos, pueroſque Deorum,
Et pugilem victorem, & equum certamine primum,
Et juvenum curas, & libera vina referre.
Deſcriptas ſervare vices operumque colores,
Cur ego, ſi nequeo ignoroque, poeta ſalutor?
Cur neſcire, pudens prave, quam diſcere malo?
Verſibus exponi tragicis res comica non volt:
Indignatur item privatis ac prope ſocco

COMMENTARY.

Elegiac, *Dramatic*, and *Lyric*. But the diſtinction of the ſeveral ſpecies of poetry *in general* is ſo obvious, that there can ſcarcely be any miſtake about them. The difficulty is to know [from ℣ 86 to 89] how far, *in particular caſes*, each may partake of other, without deſtroying that *natural and neceſſary difference*, which ought to ſubſiſt betwixt them all. To explane this, which is a point of great nicety, he conſiders [from ℣ 89 to 99] the caſe of dramatic poetry; the two ſpecies of which are as diſtinct from each other, as any two can be, and yet there are times, when the features of the one will be allowed to reſemble thoſe of the other. For, 1. Comedy, in the paſſionate parts, will admit of a tragic elevation: and, 2. Tragedy, in its ſoft diſtreſsful ſcenes, condeſcends to the eaſe of familiar converſation. But the poet had a further view in chuſing this inſtance. For he gets by this means into the main of his ſubject, which was dramatic poetry, and, by the moſt delicate tranſition imaginable, proceeds [from l. 89 to 323] to deliver a ſeries of rules, interſperſed with hiſtorical accounts, and enlivened by digreſſions, for the regulation and improvement of the ROMAN STAGE.

PART

Dignis carminibus narrari coena Thyeſtae.
Singula quaeque locum teneant ſortita decentem.
Interdum tamen & vocem comoedia tollit,
Iratuſque Chremes tumido dilitigat ore.
Et tragicus plerumque dolet ſermone pedeſtri.
Telephus aut Peleus, cum pauper & exul uterque,
Projicit ampullas et ſeſquipedalia verba,
Si curat cor ſpectantis tetigiſſe querela.
Non ſatis eſt pulchra eſſe poemata; dulcia ſunto,
Et quocunque volent, animum auditoris agunto.
Ut ridentibus adrident, ita flentibus adflent
Humani voltus. ſi vis me flere, dolendum eſt
Primum ipſi tibi: tunc tua me infortunia laedent.
Telephe, vel Peleu, male ſi mandata loqueris,
Aut dormitabo, aut ridebo. triſtia maeſtum
Voltum verba decent; iratum, plena minarum;
Ludentem, laſciva; ſeverum, ſeria dictu.
Format enim Natura prius nos intus ad omnem
Fortunarum habitum; juvat, aut inpellit ad iram,
Aut ad humum maerore gravi deducit, & angit:
Poſt effert animi motus interprete lingua.

COMMENTARY.

PART II.

Directions for the regulation and improvement of the Roman ſtage.

HAVING fixed the diſtinct limits and provinces of the two ſpecies of the drama, the poet enters directly on his ſubject, and conſiders, I. [from ℣ 99 to 119] the properties of the *tragic ſtyle*; which will be different, 1. [to ℣ 111] according to the *internal ſtate and character* of the ſpeaker: thus one

Si dicentis erunt fortunis abſona dicta,
Romani tollent equiteſque patreſque cachinnum.
Intererit multum, Divuſne loquatur, an heros;
Maturuſne ſenex, an adhuc florente juventa
Fervidus; & matrona potens, an ſedula nutrix;
Mercatorne vagus, cultorne virentis agelli;
Colchus, an Aſſyrius; Thebis nutritus, an Argis.
Aut famam ſequere, aut ſibi convenientia finge,
Scriptor. Homereum ſi forte reponis Achillem;
Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
Jura neget ſibi nata, nihil non arroget armis.
Sit Medea ferox invictaque, flebilis Ino,
Perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, triſtis Oreſtes.
Si quid inexpertum ſcenae conmittis, & audes
Perſonam formare novam; ſervetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto proceſſerit, & ſibi conſtet.
Difficile eſt proprie communia dicere: tuque

COMMENTARY.

one ſort of expreſſion will become the *angry*, another, the *ſorrowful*; this, the *gay*, that, the *ſevere*. And, 2. [from ℣ 111 to 119] according to the outward circumſtances of *rank*, *age*, *office*, or *country*. II. Next [to ℣ 179] he treats of the *characters*, which are of two ſorts. 1. *Old ones, revived*: and, 2. *Invented, or new ones*. In relation to the *firſt* [from ℣ 119 to 125] the precept is, to *follow fame*; that is, to faſhion the character according to the *received, ſtanding idea*, which tradition and elder times have conſecrated; that idea being the ſole teſt, whereby to judge of it. 2. In the reſpect of the *latter* [from ℣ 125 to 128] the great requiſite is *uniformity*, or *conſiſtency of repreſentation*. But the formation of quite *new characters* is a work of great difficulty and hazard. For here, there is no generally received

Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus,
Quàm ſi proferres ignota indictaque primus.
Publica materies privati juris erit, ſi
Non circa vilem patulumque moraberis orbem;
Nec verbum verbo curabis reddere fidus
Interpres; nec deſilies imitator in artum,
Unde pedem proferre pudor vetet aut operis lex.
Nec ſic incipies, ut ſcriptor cyclius olim:
FORTUNAM PRIAMI CANTABO, ET NOBILE BELLUM.
Quid dignum tanto feret hic promiſſor hiatu?
Parturiunt montes: naſcetur ridiculus mus.
Quanto rectius hic, qui nîl molitur inepte!
DIC MIHI, MUSA, VIRUM, CAPTAE POST MOENIA TROJAE,
QUI MORES HOMINUM MULTORUM VIDIT ET URBIS.
Non fumum ex fulgore, ſed ex fumo dare lucem
Cogitat, ut ſpecioſa dehinc miracula promat,

COMMENTARY.

ceived and fixed *archetype* to work after, but every one judges, of common right, according to the extent and comprehenſion of his own idea. Therefore [to ℣ 136] he adviſes to labour and refit *old characters and ſubjects*; particularly thoſe, made known and authorized by the practice of Homer and the epic writers; and directs, at the ſame time, by what means to avoid that *ſervility and unoriginal air*, ſo often charged upon ſuch pieces. I ſaid *characters and ſubjects*, for his method leading him to guard againſt ſervility of imitation in point of *characters*, the poet choſe to diſpatch the whole affair of *ſervile imitation* at once, and therefore [to ℣ 136] includes *ſubjects*, as well as *characters*.

But this very advice, about taking the ſubjects and characters from the epic poets, might be apt to lead into two faults, ariſing from the ill conduct of thoſe poets themſelves.

For,

Antiphaten, Scyllamque, & cum Cyclope Charybdin.
Nec reditum Diomedis ab interitu Meleagri,
Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo:
Semper ad eventum feſtinat; & in medias res,
Non ſecus ac notas, auditorem rapit: & quae
Deſperat tractata niteſcere poſſe, relinquit:
Atque ita mentitur, ſic veris falſa remiſcet,
Primo ne medium, medio ne diſcrepet imum.

Commentary.

For, 1. [to ℣ 146] the dignity and importance of a ſubject, made ſacred by antient fame, had ſometimes betrayed into a boaſtful and oſtentatious beginning, than which nothing can be more abſurd. And, 2. The whole ſtory being compoſed of great and ſtriking particulars, injudicious writers, for fear of loſing any part of it, which might give an occaſion of ornamenting their work, had been led to follow the *round of plain hiſtoric order*, and ſo had made the diſpoſition of their piece *unintereſting and unartful.* Now both theſe improprieties, which appear ſo ſhocking in the *epic poem*, muſt needs, with ſtill higher reaſon, deform the *tragic*. For, taking its riſe, not from the flattering views of the *poet*, but the real ſituation of the *actor*, its opening muſt, of neceſſity, be very ſimple and unpretending. And, being, from its ſhort term of action, unable naturally to prepare and bring about many events, it, of courſe, confines itſelf to *one*; as alſo for the ſake of producing a due *diſtreſs* in the plot; which can never be wrought up to any *trying* pitch, unleſs the whole attention be made to fix on *one* ſingle object. The way to avoid both theſe faults, will be to obſerve (for here the imitation cannot be too cloſe) the well-judged practice of Homer.

Having thus conſidered the affair of *imitation*, and ſhewn how *old characters*, and, to carry it ſtill further, *old* ſubjects, may be ſucceſsfully treated, he reſumes the head of *characters*,

Tu, quid ego & populus mecum deſideret, audi;
Si fautoris eges aulaea manentis, & uſque
Seſſuri, donec cantor, Vos plaudite, dicat:
Aetatis cujuſque notandi ſunt tibi mores,
Mobilibuſque decor naturis dandus & annis.
Reddere qui voces jam ſcit puer, & pede certo
Signat humum; geſtit paribus colludere, & iram
Colligit ac ponit temere, & mutatur in horas.
Inberbus juvenis, tandem cuſtode remoto,
Gaudet equis canibuſque & aprici gramine campi;
Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus aſper,
Utilium tardus proviſor, prodigus aeris,
Sublimis, cupiduſque, & amata relinquere pernix.
Converſis ſtudiis, aetas animuſque virilis

COMMENTARY.

characters, and proceeds more fully [from ℣ 153 to 179] to recommend it as a point of principal concern in the drawing of them, to be well acquainted with the manners, agreeing to the ſeveral ſucceſſive periods and ſtages of human life. And this with propriety: for, though he had given a hint to this purpoſe before,

Maturuſne ſenex, an adhuc florente juventâ
Fervidus,

yet, as it is a point of ſingular importance, and a regard to *it*, beſides other diſtinctions, muſt be conſtantly had in the draught of every character, it well deſerved a ſeparate conſideration.

Theſe inſtructions, which, in ſome degree, reſpect all kinds of poetry, being diſmiſſed; he now delivers ſome rules more peculiarly relative to the caſe of the *drama*. And, as the *miſapplication of manners*, which was the point he had been conſidering, was deſtructive of *probability*, this leads the poet, by a natural order, to cenſure ſome other ſpecies of

Quaerit opes & amicitias, inſervit honori;
Conmiſiſſe cavet quod mox mutare laboret.
Multa ſenem circumveniunt incommoda; vel quod
Quaerit, & inventis miſer abſtinet, ac timet uti;
Vel quòd res omnis timide gelideque miniſtrat,
Dilator, ſpe lentus, iners, paviduſque futuri;
Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
Se puero, caſtigator cenſorque minorum.
Multa ferunt anni venientes commoda ſecum,
Multa recedentes adimunt: ne forte ſeniles
Mandentur juveni partes, pueroque viriles.
Semper in adjunctis aevoque morabimur aptis.
Aut agitur res in ſcenis, aut acta refertur:
Segnius inritant animos demiſſa per aurem,
Quam quae ſunt oculis ſubjecta fidelibus, & quae
Ipſe ſibi tradit ſpectator. non tamen intus
Digna geri promes in ſcenam: multaque tolles
Ex oculis, quae mox narret facundia praeſens:
Ne pueros coram populo Medea trucidet;
Aut humana palam coquat exta nefarius Atreus;
Aut in avem Procne vertatur, Cadmus in anguem.
Quodcunque oſtendis mihi ſic, incredulus odi.
Neve minor, neu ſit quinto productior actu

COMMENTARY.

of miſconduct, which have the *ſame effect*. He determines then 1. [from ℣ 179 to 189] The caſe of *repreſentation* and *recital:* or what it is, which renders ſome things more proper to be *acted* on the ſtage, others more fit to be *related* on it. Next, 2. In purſuance of the ſame point, *viz.*

Fabula, quae poſci volt, & ſpectata reponi.
Nec Deus interſit, niſi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit: nec quarta loqui perſona laboret.
Actoris partes chorus, officiumque virile
Defendat: neu quid medios intercinat actus,
Quod non propoſito conducat & haereat apte.
Ille bonis faveatque & conſilietur amice,
Et regat iratos, & amet pacare tumentis:
Ille dapes laudet menſae brevis, ille ſalubrem
Juſtitiam, legeſque, & apertis otia portis:
Ille tegat commiſſa, Deoſque precetur & oret,
Ut redeat miſeris, abeat fortuna ſuperbis.
Tibia non, ut nunc, orichalco juncta, tubaeque

COMMENTARY.

viz. probability [to ℣ 193] he reſtrains the uſe of *machines*; and preſcribes the number of *acts*, and of *perſons*, to be introduced on the ſtage at the ſame time. And, 3. laſtly, the *perſona dramatis*, juſt mentioned, ſuggeſting it to his thoughts, he takes occaſion from thence to paſs on to the *chorus* [from ℣ 193 to 202] whoſe double office it was, 1. To ſuſtain the part of a *perſona dramatis* in the acts; and, 2. To connect the *acts* with ſongs, perſuading to good morals, and ſuitable to the ſubject. Further, tragedy being, originally, nothing more than a *chorus* or ſong, ſet to muſic, from which practice the harmony of the regular chorus in after-times had its riſe, he takes occaſion to digreſs [from ℣ 202 to 220] in explaining the ſimplicity and barbarity of the *old*, and the refinements of the *later*, muſic. The application of this account of the dramatic muſic to the caſe of the tragic chorus, together with a ſhort glance at the other improvements of *numbers*, *ſtyle*, &c. neceſſarily connected with it, gives him the opportunity of going off eaſily into a ſubject of near affinity with this, *viz.* the *Roman ſatiric piece*; which was indeed a ſpecies

Aemula; ſed tenuis, ſimplexque foramine pauco,
Aſpirare & adeſſe choris erat utilis, atque
Nondum ſpiſſa nimis complere ſedilia flatu:
Quo ſane populus numerabilis, utpote parvus
Et frugi caſtuſque verecunduſque coibat.
Poſtquam coepit agros extendere victor, & urbem
Laxior amplecti murus, vinoque diurno
Placari Genius feſtis inpune diebus;
Acceſſit numeriſque modiſque licentia major.
Indoctus quid enim ſaperet liberque laborum,
Ruſticus urbano confuſus, turpis honeſto?
Sic priſcae motumque & luxuriem addidit arti
Tibicen, traxitque vagus per pulpita veſtem:
Sic etiam fidibus voces crevere ſeveris,
Et tulit eloquium inſolitum facundia praeceps;
Utiliumque ſagax rerum, & divina futuri,
Sortilegis non diſcrepuit ſententia Delphis.
Carmine qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum,

Commentary.

a ſpecies of tragedy, but of ſo extraordinary a compoſition, as to require a ſet of rules, and inſtructions, peculiar to itſelf. A point, in which they agreed, but which was greatly miſunderſtood or ill-obſerved by his countrymen, was the kind of verſe or meaſure employed in them. This therefore, by a diſpoſition of the moſt beautiful method, he reſerves for a conſideration by itſelf, having, firſt of all, delivered ſuch rules, as ſeemed neceſſary about thoſe points, in which they eſſentially differed. He explains then [from ℣ 220 to 225] the *uſe and end* of the *ſatires*, ſhewing them to be deſigned for the exhilaration of the ruſtic youth, on their ſolemn feſtivities, after the exhibition of the graver, tragic ſhews. But, 2. To convert, as far as was poſſible, what

Mox etiam agreſtis Satyros nudavit, & aſper
Incolumi gravitate jocum tentavit: eo quod
Inlecebris erat & grata novitate morandus
Spectator functuſque ſacris, & potus, & exlex.
Verum ita riſores, ita commendare dicacis
Conveniet Satyros, ita vertere ſeria ludo;
Ne quicunque Deus, quicunque adhibebitur heros
Regali conſpectus in auro nuper & oſtro,
Migret in obſcuras humili ſermone tabernas:
Aut, dum vitat humum, nubis & inania captet.
Effutire levis indigna tragoedia verſus,
Ut feſtis matrona moveri juſſa diebus,
Intererit Satyris paulum pudibunda protervis.
Non ego inornata & dominantia nomina ſolum
Verbaque, Piſones, Satyrorum ſcriptor amabo:
Nec ſic enitar tragico differre colori;
Ut nihil interſit, Davuſne loquatur & audax
Pythias emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,
An cuſtos famuluſque Dei Silenus alumni.
Ex noto fictum carmen ſequar: ut ſibi quivis

COMMENTARY.

what was thus a neceſſary ſacrifice to the taſte of the multitude into a tolerable entertainment for the better ſort, he lays down [from ℣ 225 to 240] the exacteſt deſcription or idea of this ſort of poem; by means of which he inſtructs us in the due temperature and decorum of the ſatyric ſtyle. 3. Laſtly, [from ℣ 240 to 251] he directs to the choice of proper ſubjects, and defines the juſt character of thoſe principal and ſo uncommon *perſonages* in this drama, the *ſatyrs* themſelves. This being premiſed, he

 conſiders,

Speret idem; ſudet multum, fruſtraque laboret
Auſus idem: tantum ſeries juncturaque pollet:
Tantum de medio ſumtis accedit honoris.
Silvis deducti caveant, me judice, Fauni,
Ne velut innati triviis, ac pene forenſes,
Aut nimium teneris juvenentur verſibus umquam,
Aut inmunda crepent ignominioſaque dicta.
Offenduntur enim, quibus eſt equus, & pater, & res;
Nec, ſi quid fricti ciceris probat & nucis emtor,
Aequis accipiunt animis, donantve corona.
Syllaba longa brevi ſubjecta, vocatur Iambus,
Pes citus: unde etiam Trimetris adcreſcere juſſit
Nomen Iambeis, cum ſenos redderet ictus
Primus ad extremum ſimilis ſibi: non ita pridem,
Tardior ut paulo graviorque veniret ad auris,
Spondeos ſtabilis in jura paterna recepit
Commodus & patiens; non ut de ſede ſecunda
Cederet, aut quarta ſocialiter. Hic & in Accî
Nobilibus Trimetris apparet rarus, & Ennî.
In ſcenam miſſus cum magno pondere verſus,
Aut operae celeris nimium curaque carentis,
Aut ignoratae premit artis crimine turpi.

COMMENTARY.

conſiders, as was obſerved, what belongs in common to this with the regular tragedy [from ℣ 251 to 275] the laws and uſe of the *iambic* foot; reproving, at the ſame time, the indolence or ill-taſte of the Roman writers in this reſpect, and ſending them for inſtruction to the Grecian models.

Having

Non quivis videt immodulata poemata judex :
Et data Romanis venia eſt indigna poetis.
Idcircone vager, ſcribamque licenter ? ut omnis
Viſuros peccata putem mea ; tutus & intra
Spem veniae cautus ? vitavi denique culpam,
Non laudem merui. Vos exemplaria Graeca
Nocturna verſate manu, verſate diurna.
At veſtri proavi Plautinos & numeros &
Laudavere ſales ; nimium patienter utrumque
(Ne dicam ſtulte) mirati : ſi modo ego & vos
Scimus inurbanum lepido ſeponere dicto,
Legitimumque ſonum digitis callemus & aure.
Ignotum tragicae genus inveniſſe Camenae
Dicitur, & plauſtris vexiſſe poemata Theſpis
Qui canerent agerentque, peruncti faecibus ora.
Poſt hunc perſonae pallaeque repertor honeſtae

COMMENTARY.

Having introduced his critique on the *ſtage-muſic*, and *ſatyric drama* with ſome account of the riſe and progreſs of *each*, the poet very properly concludes this whole part [from ℣ 275 to 295] with a ſhort, incidental hiſtory of the principal improvements of the *Greek tragedy and comedy*; which was artfully contrived to inſinuate the defective ſtate of the Roman drama, and to admoniſh his countrymen, both how far they had gone, and what yet remained to complete it. And hence with the advantage of the eaſieſt tranſition he ſlides into the laſt part of the epiſtle ; the deſign of which, as hath been obſerved, was to reprove an *incorrectneſs and want of care* in the Roman writers. For, having juſt obſerved their *defect*, he goes on, in the remaining part of the epiſtle, to ſum up the ſeveral cauſes, which ſeem to have produced it. And this gives him the

Aeſchylos & modicis inſtravit pulpita tignis,
Et docuit magnumque loqui, nitique cothurno.
Succeſſit vetus his Comoedia, non ſine multa
Laude: ſed in vitium libertas excidit, & vim
Dignam lege regi: lex eſt accepta; choruſque
Turpiter obticuit, ſublato jure nocendi.
Nil intentatum noſtri liquere poetae:
Nec minimum meruere decus, veſtigia Graeca
Auſi deſerere, & celebrare domeſtica facta,
Vel qui Praetextas, vel qui docuere Togatas.
Nec virtute foret clariſve potentius armis,
Quam lingua, Latium; ſi non offenderet unum-
Quemque poëtarum limae labor & mora. Vos, ô
Pompilius ſanguis, carmen reprehendite, quod non
Multa dies & multa litura coercuit, atque
Praeſectum decies non caſtigavit ad unguem.
Ingenium miſera quia fortunatius arte
Credit, & excludit ſanos Helicone poëtas

COMMENTARY.

opportunity, under every head, of preſcribing the proper remedy for each, and of inſerting ſuch further rules and precepts for good writing, as could not ſo properly come in before. The whole is managed with ſingular addreſs, as will appear from looking over particulars.

PART III.

A care and diligence in writing recommended.

I. [from l. 295 to l. 323] THE poet ridicules that falſe notion, into which the Romans had fallen, that *poetry* and *poſſeſſion* were nearly the ſame thing: that nothing more

Democritus; bona pars non unguis ponere curat,
Non barbam: ſecreta petit loca, balnea vitat.
Nanciſcetur enim pretium nomenque poëtae,
Si tribus Anticyris caput inſanabile numquam
Tonſori Licino conmiſerit. O ego laevus,
Qui purgor bilem ſub verni temporis horam!
Non alius faceret meliora poëmata: verum
Nil tanti eſt. ergo fungar vice cotis, acutum
Reddere quae ferrum valet, exſors ipſa ſecandi.
Munus & officium, nil ſcribens ipſe, docebo;
Unde parentur opes; quid alat formetque poëtam;
Quid deceat, quid non; quo virtus, quo ferat error.
Scribendi recte, ſapere eſt & principium & fons.
Rem tibi Socraticae poterunt oſtendere chartae:
Verbaque proviſam rem non invita ſequentur.
Qui didicit patriae quid debeat, & quid amicis;

COMMENTARY.

more was required in a poet, than ſome extravagant ſtarts and ſallies of thought; that coolneſs and reflexion were inconſiſtent with his character, and that poetry was not to be ſcanned by the rules of ſober ſenſe. This they carried ſo far, as to affect the outward port and air of madneſs, and, upon the ſtrength of that appearance, to ſet up for wits and poets. In oppoſition to this miſtake, which was one great hinderance to critical correctneſs, he aſſerts *wiſdom and good ſenſe to be the ſource and principle of good writing:* for the attainment of which he preſcribes, 1. [from ℣ 310 to 312] A careful ſtudy of the Socratic, that is, moral wiſdom: and, 2. [from ℣ 312 to 318] A thorough acquaintance with human nature, *that great exemplar of manners*, as he finely calls it, or, in other words, a wide, extenſive view of real, practical life. The joint

Quo ſit amore parens, quo frater amandus & hoſpes;
Quod ſit conſcripti, quod judicis officium; quae
Partes in bellum miſſi ducis; ille profecto
Reddere perſonae ſcit convenientia cuique.
Reſpicere exemplar vitae morumque jubebo
Doctum imitatorem, & veras hinc ducere voces.
Interdum ſpecioſa locis, morataque recte
Fabula, nullius veneris, ſine pondere & arte,
Valdius oblectat populum, meliuſque moratur,
Quam verſus inopes rerum, nugaeque canorae.
Graiis ingenium, Graiis dedit ore rotundo

COMMENTARY.

direction of theſe two, as means of acquiring moral knowledge, was perfectly neceſſary. For the former, when alone, is apt to grow abſtracted and unaffecting: the latter, uninſtructing and ſuperficial. The philoſopher talks without experience, and the man of the world without principles. United they ſupply each other defects; while the man of the world borrows ſo much of the philoſopher, as to be able to adjuſt the ſeveral ſentiments with preciſion and exactneſs; and the philoſopher ſo much of the man of the world as to copy the manners of life (which we can only do by experience) with *truth* and ſpirit. Both together furniſh a thorough and complete comprehenſion of human life; which manifeſting itſelf in the *juſt*, and *affecting*, forms that exquiſite degree of perfection in the character of the dramatic poet; the want of which no warmth of genius can atone for, or excuſe. Nay ſuch is the force of this nice adjuſtment of *manners* [from l. 319 to 323] that, where it has remarkably prevailed, the ſucceſs of a play hath ſometimes been ſecured by it, without one ſingle excellence or recommendation beſides.

II. He ſhews [from l. 323 to 333] another cauſe of their incorrectneſs and want of ſucceſs, in any degree, anſwering

Muſa loqui, praeter laudem, nullius avaris.
Romani pueri longis rationibus aſſem
Diſcunt in partis centum diducere. Dicas
Filius Albini, ſi de quincunce remota eſt
Uncia, quid ſuperet. poterat dixiſſe, triens? Eu!
Rem poteris ſervare tuam. Redit uncia: quid fit?
Semis. An haec animos aerugo & cura peculî
Cum ſemel inbuerit, ſperamus carmina fingi
Poſſe linenda cedro, & levi ſervanda cupreſſo?
Aut prodeſſe volunt, aut delectare poetae;
Aut ſimul & jucunda & idonea dicere vitae.
Quicquid praecipies, eſto brevis: ut cito dicta
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.

COMMENTARY.

ſwering to that of the Greek writers, to have been the low and illiberal education of the Roman youth; who, while the Greeks were taught to open all their mind to glory, were cramped in their genius by the ruſt of gain, and, by the early infuſion of ſuch pernicious principles, became unable to project a great deſign, or with any care and maſtery to complete it.

III. A third impediment to their ſucceſs in poetry [from l. 333 to 346] was their inattention to the *entire* ſcope and purpoſe of it, and from contenting themſelves with the attainment of one only of the two great ends, which are propoſed by it. For the double deſign of poetry being to *inſtruct* and *pleaſe*, the full aim and glory of the art cannot be attained without uniting them both: that is, *inſtructing* ſo as to *pleaſe*, and *pleaſing* ſo as to *inſtruct*. Under either head of *inſtruction* and *entertainment* the poet, with great addreſs, inſinuates the main art of each kind of writing, which conſiſts, 1. in *inſtructive* or *didactic poetry* [from ℣ 335 to 338] in the *conciſeneſs of the precept*: and,

(Omne ſupervacuum pleno de pectore manat.)
Ficta voluptatis cauſa ſint proxima veris:
Ne, quodcumque volet, poſcat ſibi fabula credi;
Neu pranſae Lamiae vivum puerum extrahat alvo.
Centuriae ſeniorum agitant expertia frugis:
Celſi praetereunt auſtera poëmata Ramnes.
Omne tulit punctum, qui miſcuit utile dulci,
Lectorem delectando, pariterque monendo.
Hic meret aera liber Soſiis, hic & mare tranſit,
Et longum noto ſcriptori prorogat aevum.
Sunt delicta tamen, quibus ignoviſſe velimus:
Nam neque chorda ſonum reddit, quem volt manus & mens;
Poſcentique gravem perſaepe remittit acutum:
Nec ſemper feriet, quodcumque minabitur, arcus.
Verum ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura. quid ergo eſt?

COMMENTARY.

2. in works of *fancy* and *entertainment* [l. 338 to 341] in *probability of fiction*. But both theſe [l. 341 to 347] muſt concur in a juſt piece. But here the bad poet objects the difficulty of the terms, impoſed upon him, and that, if the critic looked for all theſe requiſites, and exacted them with rigour, it would be impoſſible to ſatisfy him: at leaſt it was more likely to diſcourage, than quicken, as he propoſed, the diligence of writers. To this the reply is [from l. 347 to 360] that he was not ſo ſevere, as to exact a faultleſs and perfect piece: that ſome inaccuracies and faults of leſs moment would eſcape the moſt cautious and guarded writer; and that, as he ſhould contemn a piece, that was generally

Ut ſcriptor ſi peccat idem librarius uſque,
Quamvis eſt monitus, venia caret; ut citharoedus
Ridetur, chorda qui ſemper oberrat eadem:
Sic mihi qui multum ceſſat, fit Choerilos ille,
Quem bis terve bonum, cum riſu miror; & idem
Indignor, quandoque bonus dormitat Homerus.
Verum operi longo fas eſt obrepere ſomnum.
Ut pictura, poëſis: erit quae, ſi propius ſtes,
Te capiat magis; & quaedam, ſi longius abſtes:
Haec amat obſcurum; volet haec ſub luce videri,
Judicis argutum quae non formidat acumen:
Haec placuit ſemel; haec decies repetita placebit.

COMMENTARY.

generally bad, notwithſtanding a few beauties, he could, on the contrary, admire a work, that was generally good, notwithſtanding a few faults. Nay, he goes on [from l. 360 to 366] to obſerve in favour of writers, againſt their too rigorous cenſurers, that what were often called faults, were really not ſo: that ſome parts of a poem ought to be leſs *ſhining*, or leſs *finiſhed*, than others; according to the light, they were placed in, or the diſtance, from which they were viewed; and that, ſerving only to connect and lead to others of greater conſequence, it was ſufficient if they pleaſed once, or did not diſpleaſe, provided that thoſe others would pleaſe on every review. All this is ſaid agreeably to *nature*, which does not allow every part of a ſubject, to be equally ſuſceptible of ornament; and to the *end of poetry*, which cannot ſo well be attained, without an inequality. The alluſions to painting, which the poet uſes, give this truth the happieſt illuſtration. Having thus made all the reaſonable allowances, which a writer could expect, he goes on to inforce the general inſtruction of this part,

O major juvenum, quamvis & voce paterna
Fingeris ad rectum, & per te ſapis; hoc tibi dictum
Tolle memor: certis medium ac tolerabile rebus
Recte concedi: conſultus juris, & actor
Cauſarum mediocris; abeſt virtute diſerti
Meſſallae, nec ſcit quantum Caſcellius Aulus;
Sed tamen in pretio eſt: mediocribus eſſe poetis
Non homines, non Dî, non conceſſere columnae.
Ut gratas inter menſas ſymphonia diſcors,
Et craſſum unguentum, & Sardo cum melle papaver
Offendunt; poterat duci quia coena ſine iſtis:
Sic animis natum inventumque poëma juvandis,
Si paulum ſummo deceſſit, vergit ad imum.
Ludere qui neſcit, campeſtribus abſtinet armis;
Indoctuſque pilae, diſcive, trochive, quieſcit;
Ne ſpiſſae riſum tollant inpune coronae:
Qui neſcit verſus, tamen audet fingere. Quid ni?

COMMENTARY.

part, *viz.* a *diligence in writing*, by ſhewing [from l. 366 to 379] that a mediocrity, or middle progreſs, however tolerable, or even commendable, it might be in other arts, would never be allowed in this: for which he aſſigns this very obvious and juſt reaſon; that, as the main end of poetry is to *pleaſe*, if it did not reach that point (which it could not do by ſtopping ever ſo little on this ſide excellence) it was, like bad muſic, bad perfumes, or any other bad thing, which we can do without, and whoſe end ſhould be to pleaſe, *offenſive, and diſagreeable*, and for want of being very good, exquiſitely and inſufferably bad. This reflexion leads him with great advantage [from l. 379 to 391] to the general concluſion in view, *viz.* that as none but excellent poetry

Liber & ingenuus; praeſertim cenſus equeſtrem
Summam nummorum, vitioque remotus ab omni.
Tu nihil invita dices facieſve Minerva:
Id tibi judicium eſt, ea mens. ſi quid tamen olim
Scripſeris, in Maecî deſcendat judicis auris,
Et patris, & noſtras; nonumque prematur in annum,
Membranis intus poſitis. Delere licebit
Quod non edideris: neſcit vox miſſa reverti.
Silveſtris homines ſacer interpreſque Deorum
Caedibus & victu foedo deterruit Orpheus;
Dictus ob hoc lenire tigris rabidoſque leones.
Dictus & Amphion, Thebanae conditor arcis,
Saxa movere ſono teſtudinis, & prece blanda
Ducere quo vellet. fuit haec ſapientia quondam,
Publica privatis ſecernere, ſacra profanis;
Concubitu prohibere vago; dare jura maritis;
Oppida moliri; leges incidere ligno.

COMMENTARY.

poetry will be allowed, it ſhould be a warning to writers, how they engage in it without abilities; or publiſh without ſevere and frequent correction. But to ſtimulate the poet, who, notwithſtanding the allowances already made, might be ſomething ſtruck with this laſt reflexion, he flings out [from l. 391 to 408] into a fine encomium on the dignity and excellence of the art itſelf, by recounting its antient honours. This encomium, beſides its great uſefulneſs in invigorating the mind of the poet, has this further view, to recommend and revive, together with its honours, the office of antient poeſy; which was employed about the nobleſt and moſt important ſubjects; the ſacred ſource, from whence thoſe honours were derived.

From

Sic honor & nomen divinis vatibus atque
Carminibus venit. poſt hoc inſignis Homerus
Tyrtaeuſque mares animos in Martia bella
Verſibus exacuit. dictae per carmina ſortes,
Et vitae monſtrata via eſt, & gratia regum
Pieriis tentata modis, luduſque repertus,
Et longorum operum finis; ne forte pudori
Sit tibi Muſa lyrae ſolers, & cantor Apollo.
Natura fieret laudabile carmen, an arte,
Quaeſitum eſt. Ego nec ſtudium ſine divite vena,
Nec rude quid poſſit video ingenium: alterius ſic
Altera poſcit opem res, & conjurat amice.
Qui ſtudet optatam curſu contingere metam,
Multa tulit fecitque puer; ſudavit & alſit;

Commentary.

From this tranſient view of the ſeveral ſpecies of poetry, terminating, as by a beautiful contrivance it is made to do, in the *Ode*, the order of his ideas carries him into ſome reflexions on the power of genius (which ſo eſſentially belongs to the lyric Muſe) and to ſettle thereby a point of criticiſm, much controverted amongſt the antients, and on which a very conſiderable ſtreſs would apparently be laid. For, if after all, ſo much art and care, and caution be demanded in poetry, what becomes of genius, in which alone it had been thought to conſiſt? Would the critic inſinuate, that good poems can be the ſole effect of art, and go ſo far, in oppoſition to the reigning prejudice, as to aſſert nature to be of no force at all? This objection, which would be apt to occur to the general ſcope and tenor of the epiſtle, as having turned principally on *art* and *rules* without inſiſting much on natural *energy*, the poet obviates at once [from ℣ 408 to 419] by reconciling two things which were held, it ſeems, incompatible and demanding in the poet,

Abſtinuit venere & vino. qui Pythia cantat
Tibicen, didicit prius, extimuitque magiſtrum.
Nec ſatis eſt dixiſſe, Ego mira poëmata pango:
Occupet extremum ſcabies: mihi turpe relinqui eſt,
Et, quod non didici, ſane neſcire fateri.
Ut praeco, ad merces turbam qui cogit emendas;
Adſentatores jubet ad lucrum ire poëta
Dives agris, dives poſitis in foenore nummis.
Si vero eſt, unctum qui recte ponere poſſit,
Et ſpondere levi pro paupere, & eripere artis
Litibus inplicitum; mirabor, ſi ſciet inter-
Noſcere mendacem verumque beatus amicum.
Tu ſeu donaris, ſeu quid donare voles cui;
Nolito ad verſus tibi factos ducere plenum
Laetitiae: clamabit enim: Pulchre, bene, recte!
Palleſcet; ſuper his etiam ſtillabit amicis
Ex oculis rorem; ſaliet; tundet pede terram.
Ut qui conducti plorant in funere, dicunt
Et faciunt prope plura dolentibus ex animo: ſic

COMMENTARY.

poet, beſides the fire of real genius, all the labour and diſcipline of art. But there is one thing ſtill wanting. The poet may be excellently formed by nature, and accompliſhed by art, but will his own judgment be a ſufficient guide, without aſſiſtance from others? Will not the partiality of an author for his own works ſometimes prevail over the united force of rules and genius, unleſs he call in a fairer and leſs intereſted guide? Doubtleſs it will: and therefore the poet, with the utmoſt propriety, adds [from ℣ 419 to 450] as a neceſſary part of this inſtructive monition to his brother poets, ſome directions concerning the choice

Deriſor vera plus laudatore movetur.
Reges dicuntur multis urguere culullis,
Et torquere mero, quem perſpexiſſe laborant
An ſit amicitia dignus. ſi carmina condes,
Nunquam te fallant animi ſub volpe latentes.
Quintilio ſi quid recitares: Corrige ſodes
Hoc, aiebat, & hoc. melius te poſſe negares,
Bis terque expertum fruſtra? delere jubebat,
Et male ter natos incudi reddere verſus.
Si defendere delictum, quam vertere, malles;
Nullum ultra verbum, aut operam inſumebat inanem,
Quin ſine rivali teque & tua ſolus amares.
Vir bonus & prudens verſus reprehendet inertis;
Culpabit duros; incomptis adlinet atrum
Tranſverſo calamo ſignum; ambitioſa recidet
Ornamenta; parum claris lucem dare coget;
Arguet ambigue dictum; mutanda notabit;
Fiet Ariſtarchus; non dicet, Cur ego amicum
Offendam in nugis? Hae nugae ſeria ducent

COMMENTARY.

choice of a prudent and ſincere friend, whoſe unbyaſſed ſenſe might at all times correct the prejudices, indiſcretions, and overſights of the author. And to impreſs this neceſſary care, with greater force, on the poet, he cloſes the whole with ſhewing the dreadful conſequences of being impoſed upon in ſo nice an affair; repreſenting, in all the ſtrength of colouring, the picture of a bad poet, infatuated, to a degree of madneſs, by a fond conceit of his own works, and expoſed thereby (ſo important had been the ſervice of timely advice) to the contempt and ſcorn of the public.

And

In mala deriſum ſemel, exceptumque ſiniſtre.
Ut mala quem ſcabies aut morbus regius urguet,
Aut fanaticus error, & iracunda Diana;
Veſanum tetigiſſe timent fugiuntque poetam,
Qui ſapiunt: agitant pueri, incautique ſequuntur.
Hic, dum ſublimis verſus ructatur, & errat,
Si veluti merulis intentus decidit auceps
In puteum, foveamve; licet, Succurrite, longum
Clamet, io cives: non ſit qui tollere curet.
Si curet quis opem ferre, & demittere funem;
Quî ſcis, an prudens huc ſe projecerit, atque
Servari nolit? dicam: Siculique poetae
Narrabo interitum. Deus inmortalis haberi
Dum cupit Empedocles, ardentem frigidus Aetnam
Inſiluit. ſit jus, liceatque perire poëtis.
Invitum qui ſervat, idem facit occidenti.
Nec ſemel hoc fecit; nec ſi retractus erit jam,
Fiet homo, & ponet famoſae mortis amorem.
Nec ſatis adparet, cur verſus factitet; utrum
Minxerit in patrios cineres, an triſte bidental

COMMENTARY.

And now, an unity of deſign in this epiſtle, and the pertinent connection of its ſeveral parts being, it is preſumed, from this method of illuſtration, clearly and indiſputably ſhewn, what will be thought of the critical talents of that faſhionable interpreter of Horace, who, after a ſtudied tranſlation of this piece, ſupported by a long, elaborate commentary, minutely condeſcending to ſcrutinize each part, could yet perceive ſo little of its true form and character, as to give it for his ſummary judgment, in conclu-

Moverit inceſtus: certe furit, ac velut urſus
Objectos caveae valuit ſi frangere clathros,
Indoctum doctumque fugat recitator acerbus.
Quem vero arripuit, tenet, occiditque legendo,
Non miſſura cutem, niſi plena cruoris, hirudo.

COMMENTARY.

cluſion; "*Comme il* [Horace] *ne travailloit pas à cela de ſuite et qu'il ne gardoit d'autre ordre que celui des matieres que le hazard lui donnoit à lire et à examiner, il eſt arrivé delà qu'* IL N' Y A AUCUNE METHODE NI AUCUNE LIAISON DE PARTIES DANS CE TRAITE', *qui même n'a jamais été achevé, Horace n' ayant pas eu le tems d'y mettre la derniere main, ou, ce qui eſt plus vraiſemblable, n'ayant pas voulu s'en donner la peine.*" [Introd. remarks to the art of poetry.] The ſofteſt thing that can be ſaid of ſuch a critic, is, that he well deſerves the cenſure, he ſo juſtly applied to the great Scaliger, *S'il l'avoit bien entendu, il lui auroit rendu plus de juſtice et en auroit parlé plus modeſtement.*

NOTES

NOTES

ON THE

Art of Poetry.

PREFACE
TO THE
NOTES.

THE text of this epiſtle is given from Dr. BENTLEY's edition, except in ſome few places, of which the reader is advertized in the notes. Theſe, that they might not break in too much on the thread of the Commentary, are here printed by themſelves. For the reſt, let me apologize with a great critic: *Nobis viri docti ignoſcent, ſi hæc fuſius: præſertim ſi cogitent, veri critici eſſe, non literulam alibi ejicere, alibi innocentem ſyllabam & quæ nunquam malè merita de patriâ fuerit, per jocum & ludum trucidare & configere; verùm rectè de autoribus & rebus judicare, quod & ſolidæ & abſolutæ eruditionis eſt. Quo, ni fallor, omnes aſpiramus.* HEINSIUS.

NOTES

ON THE

ART OF POETRY.

1. HUMANO CAPITI &c.] It is ſeen, in the comment, how *elegantly* preparatory this firſt part [to ℣ 89] is to the main ſubject, agreeably to the genius of the Epiſtle. But elegance, in good hands, always implies *propriety*; as is the caſe here. For the critic's rules muſt be taken either 1. from the *general* ſtanding laws of compoſition; or, 2. from the peculiar ones, appropriated to the *kind*. Now the direction to be fetched from the former of theſe ſources will of courſe *precede*, as well on account of its ſuperior weight and dignity, as that the mind itſelf delights to deſcend from *univerſals* to the conſideration of *particulars*. Agreeably to this rule of nature, the poet, having to correct, in the Roman drama, theſe three points, 1. a miſconduct in the diſpoſition; 2. an abuſe of language, and 3. a diſregard of the peculiar characters and *colorings* of its different ſpecies, hath choſen to do this on principles of univerſal nature; which, while they include the caſe of the drama, at the ſame time extend to poetic compoſition at large. Theſe prefatory, univerſal obſervations being delivered, he then proceeds, with advantage, to the *ſecond* ſource of his art, viz. the conſideration of the laws and rules peculiar to the *kind*.

14. INCEPTIS GRAVIBUS, &c.] Theſe preparatory obſervations concerning the laws of poetic compoſition at large have been thought to glance more *particularly* at the

epic poetry. Which was not improper. For 1. the *drama*, which he was about to criticiſe, had its riſe and origin from the *epos*. Thus we are told by the great critic, that Homer was the firſt, who *invented dramatic imitations*, μόνος — ὅτι μιμήσεις δραματικὰς ἐποίησε. Hence, as one obſerves, "There was no more left for tragedy to do after him, "than to erect a ſtage, and draw his dialogues and cha- "racters into ſcenes; turning in the ſame manner upon "one principal action or event, with regard to place and "time, which was ſuitable to a real ſpectacle." [*Characteriſt.* V. 1. p. 198.] 2. The ſeveral cenſures, here pointed at the epic, would bear ſtill more directly againſt the tragic poem; it being more glaringly inconſiſtent with the genius of the *drama* to admit of foreign and digreſſive ornaments, than of the extended, epiſodical *epopœia*. For both theſe reaſons it was altogether pertinent to the poet's purpoſe, in a critique on the *drama*, to expoſe the vicious practice of the *epic* models. Though, to preſerve the unity of his piece, and for a further reaſon [ſee n. on ℣ 1] he hath artfully done this under the cover of *general* criticiſm.

25. DECIPIMUR SPECIE RECTI. &c.] *Hoc iis accidit, qui, non introſpectis penitus virtutibus, ad primum ſe velut adſpectum orationis aptârunt; &, cum iis feliciſſime ceſſit imitatio, verbis atque numeris ſunt non multum differentes, vim dicendi atque inventionis non aſſequuntur, ſed plerumque declinant in pejus, & proxima virtutibus vitia comprehendunt, fiuntque pro grandibus tumidi; preſſis exiles; fortibus temerarii; lætis corrupti; compoſitis exultantes; ſimplicibus negligentes.—Ergò primum eſt, ut, quod imitaturus eſt quiſque, intelligat, &, quare bonum ſit ſciat.* [Quinctil. inſt. orat. L. x. c. ii.]

29. QUI VARIARE CUPIT REM PRODIGIALITER UNAM, &c.] The word *prodigialiter* apparently refers to that fictitious monſter, under which the poet alluſively ſhadows out the idea of abſurd and inconſiſtent compoſition. The application however differs in this, that, whereas the monſter, there painted, was intended to expoſe the extravagance of putting together incongruous

parts,

parts, without any reference to a *whole*, this *prodigy* is deſigned to characterize a *whole*, but deformed by the ill-judged poſition of its *parts*. The former is like a monſter, whoſe ſeveral members, as of right belonging to different animals, could, by no diſpoſition, be made to conſtitute *one* conſiſtent animal. The other, like a landſkip, which hath no objects abſolutely *irrelative*, or irreducible to a *whole*, but which a wrong poſition of the *parts* only renders *prodigious*. Send the *boar to the woods*; and *the dolphin to the waves*; and the painter might ſhew them both on the ſame canvaſs.

Each is a violation of the law of unity, and a real *monſter*: the one, becauſe it contains an aſſemblage of naturally *incohærent* parts; the other, becauſe its parts, though in themſelves *cohærent*, are *miſplac'd*, and disjointed.

34. INFELIX OPERIS SUMMA: QUIA PONERE TOTUM NESCIET.] The obſervation holds of *ſtatuary*, as the poet hath ſhewn, and indeed of every art, that hath a *whole* for its object. *Nicias*, the painter, uſed to ſay[a], "That "the *ſubject* was to him, what the *fable* is to the poet." Which is juſt the ſentiment of *Horace*, differently applied. For by the *ſubject* is meant the whole of the painter's plan, the *totum*, which it will be impoſſible for thoſe to expreſs, who lay out their pains ſo ſollicitouſly in finiſhing ſingle parts. Thus, to take an obvious example, the landſkip-painter is to draw together, and form into *one* entire view certain beautiful, or ſtriking objects. This is his main care. It is not even eſſential to the merit of his piece to labour, with extreme exactneſs, the principal conſtituent parts. But for the reſt, a *ſhrub* or *flower*, a ſtragling *goat* or *ſheep*, theſe may be touched very negligently. We have a great modern inſtance. Few painters have known to furniſh *finer* ſcenes, or have poſſeſſed the art of combining *woods*, *lakes*, and *rocks* into more agreeable pictures, than G. POUSSIN. Yet his *animals* are obſerved to be ſcarce worthy an ordinary artiſt. The uſe of theſe is *ſimply* to decorate the ſcene, and ſo their beauty depends, not on the truth and correctneſs of the *drawing*, but, on the elegance

[a] See *Victor. Comm. in Dem. Phaler.* p. 73. *Florent.* 1594.

of their *diſpoſition* only. For, in a landſkip, the eye careleſly glances over the ſmaller parts, and regards them only in reference to the ſurrounding objects. The painter's labour therefore is loſt, or rather miſemployed, to the prejudice of the *whole* when it ſtrives to finiſh, ſo minutely, *particular* objects. If ſome great maſters have ſhewn themſelves ambitious of this fame, the objects, they have laboured, have been always ſuch, as are moſt conſiderable in themſelves, and have, beſides, an *effect* in illuſtrating and ſetting off the entire ſcenery. It is chiefly in this view, that Ruiſdale's *waters*, and Claude Lorain's *ſkies* are ſo admirable.

40. — CUI LECTA POTENTER ERIT RES,] *Potenter*, i. e. κατὰ δύναμιν, *Lambin:* which gives a pertinent ſenſe, but without juſtifying the expreſſion. The learned editor of Statius propoſes to read *pudenter*, a word uſed by Horace on other occaſions, and which ſuits the meaning of the place, as well. A ſimilar paſſage in the epiſtle to Auguſtus adds ſome weight to this conjecture;

nec meus audet
REM *tentare* PUDOR, *quem vires ferre recuſent.*

45. HOC AMET, HOC SPERNAT, PROMISSI CARMINIS AUCTOR.—IN VERBIS ETIAM TENUIS CAUTUSQUE SERENDIS,] Dr. Bentley hath inverted the order of theſe two lines; not merely, as I conceive, without ſufficient reaſon, but in prejudice alſo to the ſcope and tenor of the poet's ſenſe; in which caſe only I allow myſelf to depart from his text. The whole precept, on poetical diſtribution, is delivered, as of importance:

[*Ordinis hæc virtus erit et venus, aut ego fallor*]

And ſuch indeed it is: for 1. It reſpects no leſs than the conſtitution of a *whole*, i. e. the reduction of a ſubject into one intire, conſiſtent plan: the moſt momentous and difficult of all the offices of *invention*, and which is more immediately addreſſed, in the high and ſublime ſenſe of the word, to the POET. 2. 'Tis no trivial *whole*, which the precept had in view, but, as the context ſhews, and as is

further

ſurther apparent from ℣ 150, where this topic is reſumed and treated more at large, the *epos* and the *drama*. With what propriety then is a rule of ſuch dignity inforced by that ſtrong emphatic concluſion,

Hoc amet, hoc ſpernat promiſſi carminis auctor:

i. e. "Be this rule held ſacred and inviolate by him, who "hath projected and engaged in a work, deſerving the "appellation of a poem." Were the ſubject only the choice or invention of *words*, the ſolemnity of ſuch an application muſt be ridiculous.

As for the conſtruction, the commoneſt reader can find himſelf at no loſs to defend it againſt the force of the Doctor's objections.

46. IN VERBIS ETIAM TENUIS, &c.] I have ſaid, that theſe preparatory obſervations concerning an *unity* of deſign, the *abuſe of language*, and the different *colorings* of the ſeveral ſpecies of poetry, whilſt they extend to poetic compoſition at *large*, more particularly reſpect the caſe of the *drama*. This has been ſhewn already in reſpect of the *firſt* of theſe articles in not. on ℣ 34. The *laſt* will be conſidered in not. on ℣ 73. I will here ſhew the ſame of the *ſecond*, concerning the *abuſe of words*. For 1. the ſtyle of the drama repreſenting real life, and demanding, on that account, a peculiar eaſe and familiarity in the language, the practice of coining *new* words muſt be more inſufferable in *this*, than in any other ſpecies of poetry. The majeſty of the epic will even ſometimes require to be ſupported by this means, when the commoneſt ear would reſent it, as downright affectation, upon the ſtage. Hence the peculiar propriety of this rule to the dramatic writer,

In verbis etiam tenuis cautuſque ſerendis.

2. Next, it is neceſſary to keep the tragic ſtyle, though condeſcending, in ſome ſort, to the familiar caſt of converſation, from ſinking beneath the dignity of the perſonages, and the ſolemnity of the repreſentation. Now no expedient can more happily effect this, than what the poet preſcribes concerning the *poſition* and *derivation* of words. For thus, the language, without incurring the odium of abſolutely

abſolutely *invented* terms, ſuſtains itſelf in a becoming ſtate-lineſs and reſerve, and, whilſt it ſeems to keep to the level of converſation, artfully eludes the meanneſs of a trite, proſaic ſtyle. I will add, that were theſe two directions, 1. concerning the poſition of *known* words, and 2. an eaſy deduction of *new* ones from the learned languages, carefully obſerved (to which end the ſtudy of Shakeſpear, who, of all the moderns, hath moſt ſucceſsfully practiſed this ſecret, would be highly ſerviceable) they would unqueſtionably furniſh a more natural and truly dramatic language, than is, at preſent, in uſe amongſt the writers for the ſtage.

Dixeris egregiè, notum ſi callida verbum
Reddiderit junctura novum.
Et nova fictaque nuper habebunt verba fidem, ſi
Græco fonte cadent, parcè detorta.

48. — SI FORTE NECESSE EST—INDICIIS MONSTRARE RECENTIBUS, &c.] *Uſitatis* [*verbis*] *tutius utimur: nova non ſine quodam periculo fingimus.* [Quinctil. L. i. c. v.] Accordingly, we are told, *Salluſtii verborum fingendi et novandi ſtudium cum multâ prorſus invidiâ fuit.* [A. Gell. Noct. Attic. L. iv. c. xv.] Yet this hinders not, but that it may be ſometimes proper to hazard the experiment: *Audendum tamen; namque, ut Cicero ait, etiam quæ primò dura viſa ſunt, uſu molliuntur.* [Quinct. ib.]

70. MULTA RENASCENTUR, QUAE JAM CECIDERE;] This *revival* of *old* words is one of thoſe *niceties* in compoſition, not to be attempted by any but great maſters. It may be done two ways, 1. by reſtoring ſuch terms, as are grown entirely obſolete; or, 2. by ſelecting out of thoſe, which have ſtill a currency, and are not quite laid aſide, ſuch as are moſt forcible and expreſſive. For ſo I underſtand a paſſage in Cicero, who urges this double uſe of old words, as an argument, to his orator, for the diligent ſtudy of the old Latin writers. His words are theſe: *Loquendi elegantia, quanquam expolitur ſcientiâ literarum, tamen augetur legendis oratoribus* [*veteribus*] *et poetis: ſunt enim illi veteres, qui ornare nondum poterant ea, quæ dicebant, omnes prope præclare locuti — Neque tamen erit utendum*

utendum verbis iis quibus jam conſuetudo noſtra non utitur, niſi quando ornandi causâ, parcè, quod oſtendam; ſed uſitatis ita poterit uti, lectiſſimis ut utatur, is, qui in veteribus erit ſcriptis ſtudiosè et multum volutatus. [De Orat. L. iii. c. x.] Theſe *choice* words amongſt ſuch, as are ſtill in *uſe* I take to be thoſe, which are employed by the old writers in ſome peculiarly ſtrong and energetic ſenſe, yet ſo as with good advantage to be copied by the moderns, without appearing barbarous or affected. [See *Hor.* Lib. ii. Ep. ii. ỳ 115.] The other uſe of old terms, *i. e.* when become *obſolete*, he ſays, muſt be made *parcè*, more ſparingly. The contrary would, in oratory, be inſufferable affectation. The rule holds in poetry, but with greater latitude; for, as he obſerves in another place, and the reaſon of the thing ſpeaks, *hæc ſunt Poetarum licentiæ liberiora.* [De Or. iii. 38.] But the elegance of the ſtyle, we are told, is increaſed both ways. The reaſon is, according to Quinctilian (who was perfectly of Cicero's mind in this matter. See L. x. c. i.) *Verba à vetuſtate repetita afferunt orationi majeſtatem aliquam non ſine delectatione; nam & auctoritatem antiquitatis habent; &, quia intermiſſa ſunt, gratiam novitati ſimilem parant.* [L. i. c. vi. ſub fin.] But this is not all. The riches of a language are actually increaſed by retaining its old words; and beſides, they have often a greater real weight and dignity, than thoſe of a more faſhionable caſt, which ſucceed to them. This needs no proof to ſuch as are verſed in the earlier writings in *any* language. A very capable judge hath obſerved it in regard of the moſt admired *modern* one: *Nous avons tellement laiſſé ce qui étoit au viel françois, que nous avons laiſſé quant et quant la plus part de ce qu'il avoit de bon.* [Trait. préparatif à l'Apol. pour Herod. L. i. c. xxviii.] Or, if the reader requires a more deciſive teſtimony, let him take that of the excellent Fenelon. *Nôtre langue manque d'un grand nombre de mots & de phraſes. Il me ſemble même qu'on l'a gatée & appauvrie depuis environ cent ans, en voulant la purifier. Il eſt vrai qu'elle étoit encore un peu informe et trop verbeuſe. Mais le vieux language ſe fait regretter, quand nous le retrouvons dans* MAROT, *dans* AMIOT, *dans le Cardinal d'*OSSAT, *dans les ouvrages les plus enjouez, & dans les plus ſerieux. Il y avoit*

je

je ne ſçai quoi de court, de näif, de vif et de paſſioné. [Reflex. ſur la Rhetorique, Amſt. 1730. p. 4.] From theſe teſtimonies we learn the extreme value, which theſe great maſters of compoſition ſet upon their old writers; and as the reaſon of the thing juſtifies their opinions, we may further ſee the important uſe of ſome late attempts to reſtore a better knowledge of our *own*. Which I obſerve with pleaſure, as the growing prevalency of a very different humour, firſt catched, as it ſhould ſeem, from our commerce with the French models, and countenanced by the too ſcrupulous delicacy of ſome good writers amongſt ourſelves, had gone far towards unnerving the nobleſt modern language, and effeminating the public taſte. This was not a little forwarded by, what generally makes its appearance at the the ſame time, a kind of feminine curioſity in the choice of words; cautiouſly avoiding and reprobating all ſuch (which were not ſeldom the moſt expreſſive) as had been prophaned by a too vulgar uſe, or had ſuffered the touch of ſome other accidental taint. This ran us into periphraſis and general expreſſion; the peculiar bane of every poliſhed language. Whereas the rhetorician's judgment here again ſhould direct us *Omnia verba (exceptis paucis parum verecundis) ſunt alicubi optima; nam et humilibus interim et vulgaribus eſt opus, et quæ cultiore in parte videntur ſordida, ubi res poſcit, propriè dicuntur.* Which ſeems borrowed from Dionyſius of Halicarnaſſus [περ. συνθεσ. § xii.] ὐδὲν ὅτω ταπεινὸν, ἢ ῥυπαρὸν, ἢ μιαρὸν, ἢ ἄλλην τινὰ δυσχέρειαν ἔχον ἔσεσθαί φημι λόγῳ μόριον, ᾧ σημαίνεταί τι σῶμα ἢ πρᾶγμα, ὃ μηδεμίαν ἕξει χώραν ἐπιτηδείαν ἐν λόγοις. However thoſe two cauſes, "The re-" jection of old words, as barbarous, and of many mo-" dern ones, as unpolite," had ſo exhauſted the ſtrength and ſtores of our language, that, as I obſerved, it was high time for ſome maſter hand to interpoſe and ſend us for ſupplies to our old poets; which, there is the higheſt authority for ſaying, no one ever deſpiſed, but for a reaſon, not very conſiſtent with his credit to avow: *rudem enim eſſe omnino in noſtris poetis aut inertiſſimæ ſegnitiæ eſt aut faſtidii delicatiſſimi* [Cic. de fin. L. i. c. ii.]

72. — SI VOLET USUS,] *Conſuetudo certiſſima loquendi magiſtra; utendumque planè ſermone, ut nummo, cui publica forma eſt* [Quinctil. L. i. c. vi.] imitated from Horace.

73. RES GESTAE, &c.] The purport of theſe lines [from ℣ 73 to 86] and their connection with what follows, hath not ſeen fully ſeen. They would expreſs this general propoſition, "That the ſeveral kinds of poetry eſſentially differ from each other, as may be gathered, not ſolely from their different ſubjects, but their different meaſures; which good ſenſe and an attention to the peculiar natures of each inſtructed the great inventers and maſters of them to employ." The uſe made of this propoſition is to infer, "That therefore the like attention ſhould be had to the different ſpecies of the ſame *kind* of poetry [℣ 89, &c.] as in the caſe of tragedy and comedy (to which the application is made) whoſe peculiar differences and correſpondencies, as reſulting from the natures of each, ſhould, in agreement to the univerſal law of *decorum*, be exactly known and diligently obſerved by the poet."

Singula quæque locum teneant ſortita decentem. ℣ 92.

But, there is a further propriety in this enumeration of the ſeveral kinds of poetry, as addreſſed to the dramatic writer. He is not only to ſtudy, for the purpoſes here explained, the characteriſtic differences of either ſpecies of the drama. He muſt further be knowing in the other *kinds* of poetry, ſo as to be able, as the nature of his work will demand, to adopt the genius of each, in its turn, and to transfer the graces of univerſal poetry into the drama. Thus, to follow the diviſion here laid down, there will ſometimes be occaſion for the pomp and high *coloring* of the EPIC narration; ſometimes for the plaintive ſoftneſs and paſſionate inconnection of the ELEGY: and the chorus, if characterized in the antient manner, muſt catch the fiery, inraptured ſpirit of the ODE.

Deſcriptas ſervare vices operumque colores,
Cur ego, ſi nequeo ignoroque, POETA *ſalutor?*

Hence is ſeen the truth of that remark, which there hath been more than once the occaſion of making, "That, however

" however general theſe prefatory inſtructions may appear,
" they more eſpecially reſpect the caſe of the *drama*."

90. INDIGNATUR ITEM, &c. — COENA THYESTAE.] *Il met le ſouper de Thyeſte pour toutes ſortes de tragedies*, ſays M. Dacier, with whom agrees the whole band of commentators: but why this ſubject ſhould be ſingled out, as the repreſentative of the reſt, is no where explained by any of them. We may be ſure, it was not taken up at random. The reaſon was, that the Thyeſtes of Ennius was peculiarly chargeable with the fault, here cenſured: as is plain from a curious paſſage in the *Orator*; where Cicero, ſpeaking of the looſe numbers of certain poets, obſerves this, in particular, of the tragedy of Thyeſtes, *Similia ſunt quædam apud noſtros: velut in Thyeſte,*

Quemnam te eſſe dicam? qui tardâ in ſenectute.

et quæ ſequuntur: quæ, niſi cùm tibicen acceſſerit, oratione ſunt ſolutæ ſimillimæ: which character exactly agrees to *this* of Horace, wherein the language of that play is cenſured, as flat and proſaic, and hardly riſing above the plain narrative of an ordinary converſation in comedy. This alluſion to a particular play, written by one of their beſt poets, and frequently exhibited on the Roman ſtage, gives great force and ſpirit to the precept, at the ſame time that it exemplifies it in the happieſt manner. It ſeems further probable to me, that the poet alſo deſigned an indirect compliment to *Varius*, whoſe Thyeſtes, we are told, [*Quinctil.* L. x. c. i.] *was not inferior to any tragedy of the Greeks.* This double intention of theſe lines well ſuited the poet's general aim, which is ſeen through all his critical works, of beating down the exceſſive admiration of the old poets, and of aſſerting and advancing the juſt honours of the deſerving moderns. It may further be obſerved, that the critics have not felt the force of the words *exponi* and *narrari* in this precept. They are admirably choſen to expreſs the two faults condemned: the firſt implying a kind of pomp and oſtentation in the language, which is therefore improper for the low ſubjects of comedy: and the later, as I have hinted, a flat, proſaic expreſſion,

not

not above the caſt of a common *narrative*, and therefore equally unfit for tragedy. Nothing can be more rambling, than the comment of Heinſius and Dacier on this laſt word.

92. SINGULA QUAEQUE LOCUM, &c.] Copied by the Rhetorician; *Sua cuique propoſita lex, ſuus cuique decor eſt. Nec comœdia in cothurnos aſſurgit, nec contrà tragœdia ſocco ingreditur. Habet tamen omnis eloquentia aliquid commune. Id imitemur, quod commune eſt.* [Quinct. L. x. c. ii.]

95. ET TRAGICUS PLERUMQUE DOLET SERMONE PEDESTRI.] Dr. Bentley connects this with the following line:

[*Et tragicus plerumque dolet ſermone pedeſtri*
Telephus aut Peleus,]

for the ſake, as he ſays, of *preſerving the oppoſition. In comœdiâ iratus Chremes tumido, in tragœdiâ Telephus pauper humili ſermone utitur.* This is ſpecious; but, if the reader attends, he will perceive, that the oppoſition is better preſerved without his connection. For it will ſtand thus: The poet firſt aſſerts of comedy at large, *that it ſometimes raiſes its voice,*

Interdum tamen & vocem comœdia tollit.

Next he confirms this general remark by appealing to a particular inſtance,

Iratuſque Chremes tumido delitigat ore.

Exactneſs of *oppoſition* will require the ſame method to be obſerved in ſpeaking of *tragedy*; which accordingly is the caſe, if we follow the vulgar reading. For, firſt, it is ſaid of *tragedy*, that, when grief is to be expreſſed, it generally condeſcends to an humbler ſtrain,

Et tragicus plerumque dolet ſermone pedeſtri.

And then the general truth, as before, is illuſtrated by a particular inſtance,

Telephus aut Peleus, cum pauper & exul uterque,
Projicit ampullas, &c.

There is no abſurdity, as the Doctor pretends, in taking

tragicus

tragicus for *tragœdiarum ſcriptor*. For the poet, by a common figure, is made to do that, which he repreſents his perſons, as doing.

But this is not the whole, that will deſerve the reader's regard in this place. A ſtrict attention to the ſcope and turn of the paſſage [from ℣ 96 to 114] will lead him to conclude, 1. "That ſome real tragedy of Telephus and "Peleus was intended in ℣ 96, in which the characters "were duly preſerved and ſet forth in proper language." This oppoſition to the *Chremes* of Terence abſolutely demands. Let us inquire what this might be. *Euripides*, we know, compoſed tragedies under theſe names; but it is unlikely, the poet ſhould contraſt the inſtance of a *Greek* tragedy to a *Latin* comedy. Nor need it be ſuppoſed. The ſubject was familiar to the Roman poets. For we find a *Telephus* aſcribed to no leſs than three of them, *Ennius*, *Accius*, and *Nævius*[a]. One of theſe then, I doubt not, is here intended. But the Roman, in thoſe times, were little more than tranſlations of the Greek-plays. Hence it is moſt likely, that the tragedy of *Telephus* (and probably of *Peleus*, though we have not ſo direct authority for this) was, in fact, the tragedy of *Euripides*, tranſlated into Latin, and accommodated to the Roman ſtage, by one of theſe writers. It remains only to enquire, if the *Telephus* itſelf of *Euripides* anſwered to this character. Which, I think, it manifeſtly did, from conſidering what his enemy, the buffoon Ariſtophanes, hath ſaid concerning it. Every body knows, that the ΒΑΤΡΑΧΟΙ of this poet contains a direct ſatyr, and burleſque upon *Euripides*. Some part of it is particularly levelled againſt his *Telephus*: whence we may certainly learn the objections, that were made to it. Yet the amount of them is only this, "That "he had drawn the character of *Telephus* in too many "circumſtances of diſtreſs and humiliation." His fault was, that he had repreſented him more like a beggar, than an unfortunate prince. Which, in more candid hands, would, I ſuppoſe, amount only to this, "That the poet "had painted his diſtreſs in the moſt natural, and affecting

[a] See *Robert Stephan's Fragm. Poet. Vet. Latinorum.*

"manner."

"manner." He had ſtripped him of his royalty, and, together with it, of the pomp and oſtentation of the regal language, the very beauty, which Horace applauds and admires in his *Telephus*.

2. Next, I think it as clear from what follows, "That "ſome real tragedy of *Telephus*, and *Peleus*, was alſo glanced "at, of a different ſtamp from the other, and in which the "characters were not ſupported by ſuch propriety of "language." Let the reader judge. Having quoted a *Telephus* and *Peleus*, as examples to the rule concerning the ſtyle of tragedy, and afterwards enlarged [from ℣ 98 to 103] on the reaſons of their excellence, he returns, with an air of inſult, to the ſame names, apoſtrophizing them in the following manner:

Telephe, vel Peleu, male ſi mandata loquêris,
Aut dormitabo aut ridebo:

But why this addreſs to *characters*, which he had before alledged, as examples of true dramatical *drawing?* Would any tolerable writer, after having applauded Shakeſpear's King *Lear*, as an inſtance of the kingly character in diſtreſs, naturally painted, apoſtrophize it, with ſuch pointed vehemence, on the contrary ſuppoſition? But let this paſs. The poet, as though a notorious violation of the critic's rules was to be throughly expoſed and corrected, goes on, in the ſeven following lines, to ſearch into the bottom of this affair, laying open the ſource and ground of his judgment; and concludes upon the whole,

Si dicentis erunt fortunis abſona dicta,
ROMANI TOLLENT EQUITESQUE PATRESQUE CACHINNUM.

Can any thing be plainer, than that this laſt line points at ſome well-known inſtance of a Latin play, which had provoked, upon this account, the contempt and laughter of the beſt judges? It may further be obſerved, that this way of underſtanding the paſſage before us, as it is more conformable to what is here ſhewn to be the general ſcope and tenor of the epiſtle, ſo doth it, in its turn, likewiſe afford ſome light, and is, in fact, the cleareſt illuſtration of the truth and certainty of this method of interpretation.

99. NON SATIS EST PULCHRA, &c.] Dr. Bentley objects to *pulchra*, becauſe this, he ſays, is a general term, including under it every ſpecies of beauty, and therefore that of *dulcis* or the *affecting*. As if *general* terms were not frequently reſtrained and determined to a *peculiar* ſenſe by the context. But the great critic did not ſufficiently attend to the connection, which, as F. Robortellus, in his paraphraſe on the epiſtle, well obſerves, ſtands thus: "It is not "enough, that tragedies have that kind of beauty, which "ariſes from a pomp and ſplendor of diction, they muſt alſo "be pathetic or affecting." *Objiciat ſe mihi hoc loco aliquis et dicat, ſi id fiat* [*i. e.* ſi projiciantur ampullæ] *corrumpi omnem venuſtatem & gravitatem poematis tragici, quod nihil niſi grande et elatum recipit. Huic ego ita reſpondendum puto, non ſatis eſſe, ut poemata venuſta ſint et dignitatem ſuam ſervent: nam dulcedine quoque et ſuavitate quâdam ſunt conſpergenda, ut poſſint auditoris animum inflectere in quancunque voluerint partem.*

But the following very ingenious note, by a gentleman, to whom I am indebted for many uſeful hints on the ſubject of theſe papers, ſhews, that the very foundation of Dr. Bentley's criticiſm is erroneous.

1. The various modes of pleaſure, of which a human mind is ſuſceptible, have diſtinct *names* aſſigned to them, correſponding to the different *ways* of perceiving, or, as Mr. Hutcheſon would expreſs it, to the different *ſenſes*. The name *pulchrum* belongs properly to thoſe objects which are correſpondent to the particular ſenſe of *beauty*; *honeſtum* to the *moral* ſenſe; and ſo of the reſt. 2. The ſenſe of beauty, affording none but *calm* pleaſures, is never ranked among the *paſſions*. 3. The name *pulchrum* does not properly belong to *objects*, which excite the paſſions; no not even the *agreeable* paſſions, as love, hope, joy. 4. *Beautiful* and *pathetic* are therefore properly oppoſed.

And yet the *pathos* is ſaid to conſtitute not only a *beauty*, but a *principal* beauty in writing. It remains that this be accounted for. And 1. when the ſame paſſions are raiſed by *real* objects, thoſe objects themſelves are not called *beautiful*. 2. Therefore the beauty belongs only to the *imitative*

tive part. 3. Exactneſs of imitation, merely as ſuch, is no object of the ſenſe of beauty. 4. The imitation of a beautiful object is, in the proper ſenſe of the word, *beautiful*. 5. We are indebted for this pleaſure to the *ſkill* of the *imitator*. 6. The ſame ſkill gives pleaſure, though of a different kind, when the object imitated is *not* beautiful. 7. Therefore, by an eaſy figure, we give the name *beauty* to theſe latter imitations. 8. Still further, wherever an object *pleaſes*, through the art of an imitator, even in ſuch caſes where there is *no actual imitation*, we ſtill pronounce it *beautiful:* but our manner of ſpeaking varies ſtill more from the proper ſenſe of the word.

When then the *pathos* is conſidered as a beauty, the meaning is this. Pathetic writing makes us *admire* the writer, makes us *pleaſed* with his ſkill. But the expreſſion is plainly figurative.

I maintain then, that Horace uſes the word *pulchrum* in its moſt proper and original ſenſe, *i. e.* for an object adapted to our *ſenſe of beauty*, but not fitted to excite the ſtronger and more forcible impreſſions of pleaſure, which attend many of our *paſſions*; eſpecially all thoſe of the tender and ſocial kind; which the word *dulce* ſtrongly points out. In ſhort, the difference is, between what pleaſes the *fancy* (for mere beauty goes no further than this) and what *touches* the *heart:* the one denotes a fair *appearance*, a ſplendid *outſide*; the other is what the human mind taſtes and reliſhes with delight.

It hath been obſerved, that, in the language of moſt nations, metaphors, taken from the ſenſe of *taſte*, are eſteemed *ſtronger* than thoſe borrowed from *ſight*. Who would not rather hear *ſweet* muſic, than *fine* muſic?—*Sweetneſs* of countenance is a deſcription of that ſort of beauty, which is moſt *affecting*. But a *fine face* one may hear of without any extraordinary emotion. *Sweetneſs* of diſpoſition too implies that, which is *moſt* likely to excite love.

However this happens, the *dulce* (in its metaphorical ſenſe) is always that, which raiſes ſome *ſtrong*, and yet *agreeable*, emotion. Of which ſort are the benevolence and compaſſion inſpired by a good tragedy.

102. SI VIS ME FLERE, DOLENDUM EST PRIMUM IPSI TIBI:] *Tragedy*, as [a] one ſaid, who had a heart to feel its tendereſt emotions, *ſheweth forth the ulcers, that are covered with tiſſue.* In order to awaken and call forth in the ſpectator all thoſe ſympathies, which naturally await on the lively exhibition of ſuch a ſcene, the writer muſt have a ſoul *tuned* to the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility, and ſuſceptible of the ſame vibrations from his own fancied images, which are known to *ſhake* the ſufferer in real life. This is ſo uncommon a pitch of humanity, that 'tis no wonder, ſo few have ſucceeded in this *trying* part of the drama. Euripides, of all the antients, had moſt of this ſympathetic tenderneſs in his nature, and accordingly we find him, without a rival in this praiſe. Τραγικώτατος τῶν ποιητῶν, ſays Ariſtotle of him [περ. ποιητ. κ. ιγ] and to the ſame purpoſe another great critic, *In affectibus cum omnibus mirus, tum in iis, qui* MISERATIONE *conſtant, facilè præcipuus* [Quinct. L. x. c. i.] They, who apply themſelves to expreſs the *pitiable* τὸ ἐλεεινὸν in tragedy, would do well to examine their own hearts by this rule, before they preſume to practiſe upon thoſe of others. See, further, this remark applied by Cicero to the ſubject of oratory, and inforced with his uſual elegance and good ſenſe. [L. ii. c. xlv. *De oratore.*]

119. AUT FAMAM SEQUERE, &c.] The connection lies thus: *Language* muſt agree with *character*; *character* with *fame*, or at leaſt with *itſelf*.

123. SIT MEDEA FEROX INVICTAQUE,] Horace took this inſtance from Euripides, where the *unconquered fierceneſs* of this character is preſerved in that due mediocrity, which nature and juſt writing demand. The poet, in giving her character, is content to ſay of her,

Βαρεῖα γὰρ φρὴν, ὐδ' ἀνέξεται κακῶς
Πάσχουσ'

And

Δεινὴ γάρ. ἤ τοι ῥᾳδίως γε συμβαλὼν
Ἐχθρόν τις αὐτῇ, καλλίνικον οἴσεται.

[a] Sir *Philip Sidney*.

And

And ſhe herſelf, when opening to the chorus her laſt horrid purpoſe, ſays fiercely indeed, but not frantically:

Μηδείς με φάυλην κἀσθενῆ νομιζέτω
Μηδ' ἡσυχαίαν.

And this is *nature*, which Seneca not perceiving, and yet willing to write up to the critic's rule, hath outraged her character beyond all bounds, and, inſtead of a reſolute, revengeful woman, hath made of her a downright fury. Hence her paſſion is wrought up to a greater height in the very firſt ſcene, than it ever reaches in the Greek poet. The tenor of her language throughout is,

invadam deos
Et cuncta quatiam

And hence, in particular, the third and forth acts expoſe to our view all the horrors of ſorcery (and thoſe too *imaged* to an extravagance) which Euripides, with ſo much better judgment, thought fit entirely to conceal.

126. SERVETUR AD IMUM QUALIS AB INCEPTO PROCESSERIT, ET SIBI CONSTET.] The rule is, as appears from the reaſon of the thing, and from Ariſtotle, "Let an *uniformity* of character be preſerved, or at leaſt a *conſiſtency*:" i. e. either let the manners be exactly the ſame from the beginning to the end of the play, as thoſe of Medea, for inſtance, and Oreſtes; or, if any change be neceſſary, let it be ſuch as may conſiſt with, and be eaſily reconciled to, the manners formerly attributed; as is ſeen in the caſe of Electra and Iphigenia. We ſhould read then, it is plain,

ſervetur ad imum
Qualis ab incepto proceſſerit, AUT *ſibi conſtet.*

The miſtake aroſe from imagining, that a character could no other way *conſiſt* with itſelf, but by being *uniform*. A miſtake however, which, as I ſaid, not the reaſon of the thing only, but Ariſtotle's rule might have ſet right. It is expreſſed thus: Τέταρτον δὲ τὸ ὁμαλόν. Κἂν γὰρ ἀνώμαλός τις ᾖ, ὁ τὴν μίμησιν παρέχων καὶ ποιῶν τὸν ἦθος ὑποτιθεὶς, ὅμως ὁμαλῶς ἀνώμαλον δεῖ εἶναι.

Ποιητ. κ. ιε. which laſt words, having been not all underſtood, have kept his interpreters from ſeeing the true ſenſe and ſcope of the precept. For they have been explained of ſuch characters, as that of *Tigellius* in Horace; which, however proper for ſatyr, or perhaps for comedy, are, by no means, fit characters for tragedy; of which Ariſtotle muſt there be chiefly underſtood to ſpeak, and to which Horace, in this place, alone confines himſelf. And the reaſon is, that tragedy imitates *exemplar vitæ morumque*, human nature at large, and not the whimſies of particular characters. 'Tis true indeed, it may be ſaid, that "though "a *whimſical* or *fantaſtic* character be improper for tragedy, "an *irreſolute* one is not. Nothing is finer than a ſtrug-"gle between different paſſions; and it is perfectly natural, "that in ſuch a circumſtance, each ſhould prevail by "turns." But then there is the wideſt difference between the two caſes. *Tigellius*, with all his fantaſtic extravagance, is as *uniform* a character, as that of *Mitio*. If the expreſſion may be allowed, its very *inconſiſtency* is of the eſſence of its *uniformity*. On the other hand, Electra, torn with ſundry conflicting paſſions, is moſt apparently, and in the propereſt notion of the word, *ununiform*. One of the ſtrongeſt touches in her character is that of a high, heroic ſpirit, ſenſible to her own, and her family's injuries, and determined, on any rate, to revenge them. Yet no ſooner is this revenge perpetrated, than ſhe ſoftens, relents, and pities. Here is a manifeſt *ununiformity*, which can, in no proper ſenſe of the expreſſion, lay claim to the critic's ὁμαλὸν, but may be ſo managed, by the poet's ſkill, as to become conſiſtent with the baſis or foundation of her character, that is to be ὁμαλῶς ἀνώμαλον. And that this, in fact, was the meaning of the critic, is plain from the ſimilar example to his own rule, given in the caſe of Iphigenia: which he ſpecifies (how juſtly, will be conſidered hereafter) as an inſtance of the ἀνωμάλε, *irregular*, or *ununiform* character, ill-expreſſed, or made *inconſiſtent*. So that the genuin ſenſe of the precept is, "Let the manners be uni-"form, or, if ununiform, yet conſiſtently ſo, or uniformly "ununiform:" exactly copied, according to the reading, here given, by Horace. Whereas, in the other way, it ſtands

ſtands thus: "Let your characters be uniform, or un-
"changed, or, if you paint an ununiform character (ſuch as
"Tigellius) let it be ununiform all the way; *i. e.* ſuch an
"irregular character to the end of the play, as it was at
"the beginning; which is, in effect, to ſay, let it be *uni-*
"*form*;" which apparently deſtroys the latter part of the precept, and makes it an unmeaning tautology with the former.

AUT SIBI CONSTET.

The Electra and Iphigenia of Euripides have been quoted, in the preceding note, as inſtances of *ununiform* characters, juſtly ſuſtained, or, what Ariſtotle calls, *uniformly ununiform:* And this, though the general opinion condemns the one, and the great critic himſelf, the other. The reader will expect ſome account to be given of this ſingularity.

1. The objection to Electra, is, that her character is drawn with ſuch heightenings of implacability and reſentment, as make it utterly incredible, ſhe ſhould, immediately, on the murder of Clytæmneſtra, fall into the ſame exceſs of grief and regret, as Oreſtes. In confutation of this cenſure I obſerve, 1. That the objection proceeds on a miſtaken preſumption, that the diſtreſs of Electra is equally violent with that of Oreſtes. On the contrary, it is diſcriminated from it by two plain marks. 1. That Oreſtes's grief is expreſſed in ſtronger and more emphatic terms — *he accuſes the Gods — he reproaches his ſiſter — he dwells upon every horrid circumſtance, that can enhance the guilt of the murder.* Electra, in the mean time, *confeſſes the ſcene to be mournful — is apprehenſive of bad conſequences — calmly ſubmits to the juſt reproaches of her brother.* 2. He labours as much as poſſible, to clear himſelf from the imputation of the act. She takes it wholly on herſelf, but, regarding it rather as her fate, than her fault, comforts herſelf in reflecting on the juſtice of it.

πατρὸς δ' ἔτισας φόνον δικαίως. Act v.

This laſt circumſtance puts the wideſt difference between the two caſes, The one ſhews a perfect diſtraction of mind, which cannot even bear the conſciouſneſs of its

crimes: the other, a firm and ſteddy ſpirit, ſenſible indeed to its miſery, but not oppreſſed or aſtoniſhed by it.

2. But this meaſure of grief, ſo delicately marked, and, with ſuch truth of character, aſcribed to Electra, ought not, it is further inſiſted, to have ſhewn itſelf, immediately, on the murder of Clytæmneſtra. But why not? There is nothing in the *character of Electra*, *the maxims of thoſe times*, or *in the diſpoſition of the drama itſelf*, to render this change improper or incredible. On the contrary, there is much, under each of theſe heads, to lead one to expect it. 1. *Electra's character* is indeed that of a fierce, and determined, but withall of a generous and virtuous woman. Her motives to revenge were, principally, a ſtrong ſenſe of juſtice, and ſuperior affection for a father, not a rooted, unnatural averſion to a mother. She acted, as appears, not from the perturbation of a tumultuous revenge (in that caſe indeed the objection had been of weight) but from a fixed abhorrence of wrong, and a virtuous ſenſe of duty. And what ſhould hinder a perſon of this character from being inſtantly touched with the diſtreſs of ſuch a ſpectacle?

2. *The maxims of thoſe times alſo favour this conduct.* For 1. The notions of ſtrict remunerative juſtice were then carried very high. This appears from the *Lex talionis*, which, we know, was in great credit in elder Greece; from whence it was afterwards transferred into the Law of the XII Tables. Hence *blood for blood* [αἷμα δ' αἵματος δανεισμὸς,— as the meſſenger, in his account of the death of Ægyſthus, expreſſes it Act iv.] was the command and rule of juſtice. This the Chorus, as well as the Parricides, frequently inſiſt upon, as the ground and juſtification of the murder. 2. This ſevere vengeance on enormous offenders was believed, not only conſonant to the rules of *human*, but to be the object, and to make the eſpecial care of the *divine*, juſtice. Of this too the Chorus takes cares to inform us:

Νέμει τοι δίκαν θεὸς ὅταν τύχῃ. Act iv.

Hence to bear a part in accompliſhing ſuch vengeance was eſteemed as well a branch of piety to the Gods, as of juſtice

juſtice towards men. This explains the reaſon of Electra's queſtion to Oreſtes, who had pleaded the impiety of murdering a mother,

Καὶ μέν γ' ἀμύνων πατρὶ, δυσεβὴς ἔσῃ;

the force of which lies in this, that a father's death revenged upon the guilty mother, was equally *pious* as juſt. 3. This vengeance was, of courſe, to be executed by the neareſt relations of the deceaſed. This the law preſcribed in judicial proſecutions. Who then ſo fit inſtruments of fate, when that juſtice was precluded to them? This is expreſſed, in anſwer to the plea of Oreſtes, that he ſhould ſuffer the vengeance of the Gods, for the murder of his mother; Electra replies,

Τῷ δαὶ πατρῴαν διαμεθῇς τιμωρίαν;

i. e. Who then ſhall repay vengeance to our father? She own the conſequence, yet inſiſts on the duty of incurring it. There was no other, to whom the right of vengeance properly belonged.

4. Further, the pagan doctrine of fate was ſuch, that, in order to diſcharge duty in one reſpect, it was unavoidable to incur guilt, in another. This was the caſe here. Phœbus commanded, and fate had decreed: yet obedience was a crime, to be expiated by future puniſhment. This may ſeem ſtrange to us, who have other notions of theſe matters, but was perfectly according to the pagan ſyſtem. The reſult is, that they knowingly expoſed themſelves to vengeance, in order to fullfil their fate. All that remained was to lament their deſtiny, and revere the awful and myſterious providence of their Gods. And this is, exactly, what Oreſtes pleads, in vindication of himſelf, elſewhere.

Ἀλλ' ὡς μὲν οὐκ εὖ, μὴ λέγ', εἰργάσαι τάδε,
Ἡμῖν δὲ τοῖς δεφάσασιν οὐκ εὐδαιμόνως. Oreſt. Act ii.

5. Laſtly, it ſhould be remembered, how heinous a crime adultery was eſteemed in the old world; when, as well as murder, we find it puniſhed with death. The law of the XII Tables expreſly ſays, ADULTERII CONVICTAM VIR ET COGNATI, UTI VELINT, NECANTO. Now, all theſe conſiderations put together, Electra might aſſiſt

aſſiſt at the aſſaſſination of her mother, conſiſtently with the ſtrongeſt feelings of piety and affection. That theſe then ſhould inſtantly break forth, ſo ſoon as the debt to juſtice, to duty, and to fate was paid, is nothing wonderful. And this, by the way, vindicates the Chorus from the inconſiſtency, by ſome charged upon it, in condemning the act, when done, which before they had laboured to juſtify. The common anſwer, "That the Chorus follows "the character of the people," is inſufficient. For (beſides that the Chorus always ſuſtains a moral character) whence that inconſiſtency in the people themſelves? The reaſon was, the popular creed of thoſe times. It had been an omiſſion of duty to have declined, it was criminal to execute, the murder.

3. The diſpoſition of the drama (whether the moſt judicious, or not, is not the queſtion) was calculated to introduce this change with the greateſt probability. Electra's principal reſentment was to Ægyſthus. From him chiefly proceeded her ill-treatment; and from him was apprehended the main danger of the enterprize. Now, Ægyſthus being taken off in the beginning of the preceding act, there was time to indulge all the movements and gratulations of revenge, which the objection ſuppoſes ſhould precede, and for a while ſuſpend the horrors of remorſe, before they came to the murder of Clytæmneſtra. This is rendered the more likely by the long parley, that goes before it; which rather tends to ſoften, than exaſperate, her reſentments; and ſeems artfully contrived to prepare the change, that follows.

On the whole, Electra's concern, as managed by the poet, is agreeable to the tenor of her character, and the circumſtances of her ſituation. To have drawn her otherwiſe, had been perhaps in the taſte of modern tragedy, but had certainly been beſide the line of nature, and practice of the antients.

11. The caſe of Iphigenia, though a greater authority ſtand in the way, is ſtill eaſier. Ariſtotle's words are, τῦ δὲ ἀνωμάλυ [παραδειγμα] ἡ ἐν Αὐλίδι Ἰφιγένεια. Οὐδὲν γὰρ ἔοικεν ἡ ἱκετεύουσα τῇ ὑστέρᾳ, i. e. "Iphigenia "is an inſtance of the inconſiſtent character: for there "is

" is no probable conformity betwixt her fears and ſuppli-
" cations at firſt, and her firmneſs and reſolution after-
" wards." But how doth this appear, independently of the name of this great critic? Iphigenia is drawn indeed, at firſt, fearful and ſuppliant: and ſurely with the greateſt obſervance of nature. The account of her deſtination to the altar was ſudden, and without the leaſt preparation; and, as Lucretius well obſerves, in commenting her caſe, NUBENDI TEMPORE IN IPSO; when her thoughts were all employ'd, and, according to the ſimplicity of thoſe times, confeſſed to be ſo, on her promiſed nuptials. The cauſe of ſuch deſtination too, as appeared at firſt, was the private, family intereſt of Menelaus. All this juſtifies, or rather demands the ſtrongeſt expreſſion of female fear and weakneſs. " But ſhe afterwards recants and voluntarily
" devotes herſelf to the altar." And this, with the ſame ſtrict attention to probability. She had now informed herſelf of the importance of the caſe. Her devotement was the demand of Apollo, and the joint petition of all Greece. The glory of her country, the dignity and intereſt of her family, the life of the generous Achilles, and her own future fame, were, all, nearly concerned in it. All this conſidered, together with the high, heroic ſentiments of thoſe times, and the ſuperior merit, as was believed, of voluntary devotement, Iphigenia's character muſt have been very unfit for the whole diſtreſs of a tragedy to turn upon, if ſhe had not, in the end, diſcovered the readieſt ſubmiſſion to her appointment. But, to ſhew with what wonderful propriety the poet knew to ſuſtain his characters, we find her, after all, and notwithſtanding the heroiſm of the change, in a ſtrong and paſſionate apoſtrophe to her native Mycenæ, confeſſing ſome involuntary apprehenſions and regrets, the remains of that inſtinctive abhorrence of death, which had before ſo ſtrongly poſſeſſed her.

Ἔθρεψας Ελλάδι μέγα φάος—
Θανοῦσα δ' οὐκ ἀναίνομαι.

Once the bright ſtar of Greece—
But I ſubmit to die.

This

This I take to be not only a full vindication of the conſiſtency of Iphigenia's character, but as delicate a ſtroke of nature, as is, perhaps, to be found in any writer.

After the writing of this note, I was pleaſed to find, that ſo ſenſible a critic, as P. Brumoi, had been before me in theſe ſentiments concerning the character of Iphigenia. The reaſons he employs, are nearly the ſame. Only he confirms them all by ſhewing, that the Iphigenia of Racine, which is modelled, not according to the practice of Euripides, but the Comment of Ariſtotle, is, in all reſpects, ſo much the worſe for it. In juſtice to this ingenious writer, it ſhould be owned, that he is almoſt the only one of his nation, who hath perfectly ſeen through the foppery, or, as ſome affect to eſteem it, the refinement of the French manners. This hath enabled him to give us, in his *Théatre des Grecs*, a maſterly and very uſeful view of the Greek ſtage; ſet forth in all its genuin ſimplicity, and defended on the ſure principles of nature and common ſenſe.

128. DIFFICILE EST PROPRIE COMMUNIA DICERE:] Lambin's Comment is *Communia hoc loco appellat Horatius argumenta fabularum à nullo adhuc tractata: & ita, quæ cuivis expoſita ſunt et in medio quodammodo poſita, quaſi vacua et à nemine occupata.* And that this is the true meaning of *communia* is evidently fixed by the words *ignota indictaque*, which are explanatory of it: ſo that the ſenſe, given it in the Commentary, is unqueſtionably the right one. Yet, notwithſtanding the clearneſs of the caſe, a late critic hath this ſtrange paſſage: *Difficile quidem eſſe proprie communia dicere, hoc eſt materiam vulgarem, notam, et è medio petitam ita immutare atque exornare, ut nova et ſcriptori propria videatur, ultro concedimus; et maximi proculdubio ponderis iſta eſt obſervatio. Sed omnibus utrinque collatis et tum difficilis, tum venuſti, tam judicii quam ingenii ratione habita, major videtur eſſe gloria, fabulam formare penitus novam, quam veterem, uſu atque mutatam de novo exhibere.* [Poet. Præl. v. ii. p. 164.] Where having, firſt, put a wrong conſtruction on the word *communia*, he employs it to introduce an impertinent criticiſm. For where does the poet prefer the glory of refitting *old* ſubjects, to that

of

of inventing *new* ones? The contrary is implied in what he urges about the ſuperior difficulty of the latter; from which he diſſuades his countrymen, only in reſpect of their abilities and inexperience in theſe matters; and in order to cultivate in them, which is the main view of the Epiſtle, a ſpirit of correctneſs, by ſending them to the old ſubjects, treated by the Greek writers.

131. PUBLICA MATERIES PRIVATI JURIS ERIT, &c.] *Publica materies* is juſt the reverſe of what the poet had before ſtyled *communia*; the latter meaning ſuch ſubjects or characters, as, though by their nature left in common to all, had yet, in fact, not been *occupied* by any writer — the former thoſe, which had already been made *public* by *occupation*[a]. In order to acquire a property in ſubjects of this ſort, the poet directs us to obſerve the three following cautions: 1. *Not to follow the trite, obvious round of the original work*, i. e. not ſervilely and ſcrupulouſly to adhere to its plan or method. 2. *Not to be tranſlators, inſtead of imitators*, i. e. if it ſhall be thought fit to imitate more expreſly any part of the original, to do it with freedom and ſpirit, and without a ſlaviſh attachment to the mode of expreſſion. 3. *Not to adopt any particular incident, that may occur in the propoſed model, which either decency, or the nature of the work would reject*. M. Dacier, who, for once, ſeems to have rightly apprehended his author, illuſtrates theſe rules, which have been conceived to contain no ſmall difficulty, from the Iliad; to which the poet himſelf refers, and probably not without an eye to particular inſtances of the errors, here condemned, in the Latin tragedies. For want of theſe, it may be of uſe to fetch an illuſtration from ſome examples in our own. And we need not look far for them. Almoſt every modern play affords an inſtance of one or other of theſe faults. The ſingle one of Catiline by B. Johnſon is, itſelf, a ſpecimen of them all. This tragedy, which hath otherwiſe great merit, and on which its author appears to have placed no ſmall value, is, in fact, the Catilinarian war

[a] The reader will perceive, that the ſenſe here given to the words *public* and *common* is taken from the civil law,

of

of Saluſt, put into poetical dialogue, and ſo offends againſt the *firſt* rule of the poet, *in following too ſervilely the plain, hiſtoric round of the original work.* 2. Next, the ſpeeches of Cicero and Catiline, of Cato and Cæſar are, all of them, direct and literal tranſlations of the hiſtorian and orator, in violation of the *ſecond* rule, which forbids *a too cloſe attachment to the mode, or form of expreſſion.* 3. There are ſeveral tranſgreſſions of that rule, which injoins *a ſtrict regard to the nature and genius of the work.* One is obvious and ſtriking. In the hiſtory, which had, for its ſubject, the whole Catilinarian war, the fates of the conſpirators were diſtinctly to be recorded, and the preceding debates, concerning the manner of their puniſhment, afforded an occaſion, too inviting to be overlooked by an hiſtorian, and above all a republican hiſtorian, of embelliſhing his narration by ſet harangues. Hence the long ſpeeches of Cæſar and Cato in the ſenate have great propriety, and are juſtly eſteemed amongſt the leading beauties of that work. But the caſe was totally different in the drama; which, taking for its ſubject the ſingle fate of Catiline, had no concern with the other conſpirators, whoſe fates at moſt ſhould only have been hinted at, not debated with all the circumſtance and pomp of rhetoric, on the ſtage. Nothing can be more flat and diſguſting, than this calm, impertinent pleading; eſpecially in the very heat and winding up of the plot. But the poet was miſled by the beauty it appeared to have in the original compoſition, without attending to the peculiar laws of the drama, and the *indecorum* it muſt needs have in ſo very different a work.

136. NEC SIC INCIPIES, UT SCRIPTOR CYCLICUS OLIM:] All this [to ℣ 153] is a continuation of the poet's advice, given above,

Rectius Iliacum carmen deducis in actus
Quam ſi proferres ignota indictaque primus.

For, having firſt ſhewn in what reſpects a cloſe obſervance of the epic form would be vicious in tragedy, he now preſcribes how far it may be uſefully admitted. And this is, 1. [from 136 to 146] in the ſimplicity and modeſty of the exordium;

exordium; and, 2. [to ℣ 153] in the artificial method and contexture of the whole. 1. The reaſon of the former rule is founded on the impropriety of raiſing a greater expectation, at ſetting out, than can, afterwards, be anſwered by the ſequel of the poem. But, becauſe the epic writers themſelves, from whom this conduct was to be drawn, had ſometimes tranſgreſſed this rule, and as the example of ſuch an error would be likely to infect, and, in all probability, actually did infect, the tragic poets of that time, he takes occaſion, 1. to criticize an abſurd inſtance of it; and, 2. next, to oppoſe to it the wiſer practice of Homer.

2. The like conduct he obſerves under the ſecond article. For, being to recommend to the tragic writer ſuch an artificial diſpoſition of his ſubject, as *haſtens rapidly to the event*, and rejects, as impertinent, all particulars in the round of the ſtory, which would unneceſſarily obſtruct his courſe to it — a plan eſſentially neceſſary to the legitimate epic — he firſt glances at the injudicious violation of this method in a certain poem on *the return of* Diomed, and then illuſtrates and lays open the ſuperior art and beauty of the Iliad. And all this, as appears, for the ſole purpoſe of explaining and inforcing the precept about forming the plots of tragedies from epic poems. Whence we ſee, how properly the examples of the errors, here condemned, are taken, not from the *former*, as the leſs attentive reader might expect, but ſolely from the *latter*; for theſe being made the objects of imitation, agreeably to the tenor of this whole part, it became neceſſary to guard againſt the influence of bad models. Which I obſerve for the ſake of thoſe, who, from not apprehending the connection of this and ſuch like paſſages in the epiſtle, haſtily conclude it to be a confuſed medley of precepts concerning the art of poetry, in general; and not a regular well-conducted piece, uniformly tending to lay open the ſtate, and to remedy the defects, of the Roman ſtage.

148. SEMPER AD EVENTUM FESTINAT; &c.] The diſpoſition, here recommended to the poet, might be ſhewn *univerſally* right from the cleareſt principles. But the propriety and beauty of it will, perhaps, be beſt apprehended by

by ſuch, as are unuſed to the more abſtract criticiſm, from attending to a *particular* inſtance. Let us conceive an objector then to put the following query: "Suppoſing the "author of the Æneis to have related, in the natural or-"der, the deſtruction of Troy, would not the ſubject "have been, to all intents and purpoſes, as much *one*, as it "is, under its preſent form; in which that event is told, "in the ſecond book, by way of epiſode?" I anſwer, by no means. The reaſon is taken from *the nature of the work*, and from *the ſtate and expectations of the reader*.

1. The *nature of an epic or narrative poem* is this, that it lays the author under an obligation of ſhewing any event, which he formally undertakes in his own perſon, at full length, and with all its material circumſtances. Every figure muſt be drawn in full proportion, and exhibited in ſtrong, glowing colours. Now had the ſubject of the ſecond book of the Æneis been related, in this extent, it muſt not only have taken up one, but many books. By this faithful and animated *drawing*, and from the time it muſt neceſſarily have to *play* upon the imagination, the event would have grown into ſuch importance, that the remainder could only have paſſed for a kind of Appendix to it.

2. The ſame concluſion is drawn from conſidering *the ſtate of the reader*. For, hurried away by an inſtinctive impatience, he purſues the *propoſed* event with eagerneſs and rapidity. So circumſtantial a detail, as was ſuppoſed, of an intermediate action not neceſſarily connected with it, breaks the courſe of his expectations, and throws back the point of view to an immoderate diſtance. In the mean time the action, thus interpoſed and preſented to his thoughts, acquires by degrees, and at length ingroſſes his whole attention. It becomes the important theme of the piece; or, at leaſt, what follows ſets out with the diſadvantage of appearing to him, as a new and diſtinct ſubject.

But now being related by way of epiſode, that is, as a ſuccinct, ſummary narration, not made by the poet himſelf, but coming from the mouth of a perſon, neceſſarily ingaged in the progreſs of the action, it ſerves for a ſhort time

time to interrupt, and, by that interruption to ſharpen, the eager expectation of the reader. It holds the attention, for a while, from the main point of view; yet not long enough to deſtroy that impatient curioſity, which looks forward to it. And thus it contributes to the ſame end, as a piece of miniature, properly introduced into a large picture. It amuſes the eye with ſomething relative to the painter's deſign, yet not ſo, as to with-hold its principal obſervation from falling on the greater ſubject. The parallel will not hold very exactly, becauſe the painter is, of neceſſity, confined to the ſame *inſtant* of time; but it may ſerve for an illuſtration of my meaning. Suppoſe the painter to take, for his ſubject, that part of Æneas's ſtory, where, with his *penates*, his *father*, and his *ſon*, he is preparing to ſet ſail for Italy. To draw *Troy in flames*, as a conſtituent part of this picture, would be manifeſtly abſurd. It would be painting two ſubjects, inſtead of one. And perhaps *Troja incenſa* might ſeize the attention before

Aſcanium Anchiſenque patrem Teucroſque penates.

But a diſtant perſpective of *burning Troy*, might be thrown into a corner of the piece, that is, epiſodically, with good advantage; where, inſtead of diſtracting the attention, and breaking the unity of the ſubject, it would concenter, as it were, with the great deſign, and have an effect in augmenting the diſtreſs of it.

153. TU, QUID EGO ET POPULUS &c.] The connection is this. "But though the ſtrict obſervance of "theſe rules, in conducting a plot, formed on the imi- "tation of an epic model, be conſiderable to the *perfection* "of a tragedy, yet it is not ſufficient to the *ſucceſs* of it. "If you would ſeize the attention, and ſecure the applauſe, "of the audience, ſomething further muſt be attempted. "You muſt (to return to the point, from which I di- "greſſed, ℣ 127) be particularly ſtudious to expreſs the "*manners*. Beſide the peculiarities of *office*, *temper*, *con-* "*dition*, *country*, &c. before conſidered, all which require "to be drawn with the utmoſt fidelity, a ſingular attention "muſt be had to the characteriſtic differences of *age*."

Ætatis cujuſque notandi ſunt tibi mores.

The reaſon of this conduct is given in the Commentary. It further ſerves to adorn this part of the epiſtle [which is wholly preceptive from ℣ 89 to 202] with thoſe beautiful pourtraitures of human life, in its ſeveral ſucceſſive ſtages, which nature and Ariſtotle had inſtructed him ſo well to paint.

157. MOBILIBUSQUE DECOR NATURIS DANDUS ET ANNIS] MOBILIBUS] *non levibus aut inconſtantibus, ſed quæ variatis ætatibus immutantur.* Lambin. NATURIS] By this word is not meant, ſimply, that inſtinctive *natural* biaſs, implanted in every man, to this or that character, but, in general, *nature*, as it appears diverſified in the different periods of life. The ſenſe will be: A certain *decorum* or propriety muſt be obſerved in painting the natures or diſpoſitions of men, varying with their years.

There is then no occaſion for changing the text, with Dr. Bentley, into

Mobilibuſque decor, maturis dandus & annis.

179. AUT AGITUR RES IN SCENIS, AUT ACTA REFERTUR: &c.] The connection is this. The *miſapplication*, juſt now mentioned, deſtroys the *credibility*. This puts the poet in mind of another miſconduct, which hath the ſame effect, viz. *intus digna geri promere in ſcenam.* But, before he makes this obſervation, it was proper to premiſe a *conceſſion* to prevent miſtakes, viz.

Segnius irritant animos, &c.

182. NON TAMEN INTUS DIGNA GERI PROMES IN SCENAM:] I know not a more ſtriking example of the tranſgreſſion of this rule, than in Seneca's Hippolytus; where Theſeus is made to weep over the mangled members of his ſon, which he attempts to put together on the ſtage. This, which has ſo horrid an appearance in the *action*, might have been ſo contrived, as to have had an infinite beauty in the *narration*; as may be ſeen from a ſimilar inſtance in Xenophon's Cyropædia, where Panthea is repre-

repreſented putting together the torn limbs of Abradates.

185. NE PUEROS CORAM POPULO &c.] Seneca, whom we before [ỳ 123] ſaw ſo ſollicitous to keep up to one rule of Horace, here makes no ſcruple to tranſgreſs another. For, in violation of this expreſs precept, and of all the laws of decency and common ſenſe, he repreſents Medea butchering her children in the very face of the people; and, as if this were too little to paint the fury of her character, he further aggravates the cruelty of the execution, with all the horrors of a lingering act. This, ſeemingly inconſiſtent, conduct of the poet was, in truth, owing to one and the ſame cauſe, namely, "The endea-"vour of ſuſtaining Medea's character." For, wanting true taſte to diſcern the exact boundaries, which nature had preſcribed to it, or true genius to ſupport him in a due preſervation of it, he, as all bad writers uſe, for fear of doing too little, unfortunately does too much, and ſo, as Shakeſpear well expreſſes it, *o'erſteps the modeſty of nature*, inflating her *ſentiments* with extravagant paſſion, and blackening her *acts* with circumſtances of unnatural horror. Though ſome of theſe faults are, in their original, I ſuſpect, none of his. For, to ſay nothing of *that* of Ennius, Ovid's Medea was, at this time, very famous, and as, I think, may be collected from the judgment paſſed upon it by Quinctilian, had ſome of the vices, here charged upon Seneca. *Ovidii Medea*, ſays he, *videtur mihi oſtendere, quantum vir ille præſtare potuerit, ſi ingenio ſuo temperare, quàm indulgere, maluiſſet.* It is not poſſible indeed to ſay exactly, wherein this *intemperance* conſiſted; but it is not unlikely, that, amongſt other things, it might ſhew itſelf in the ſorceries and incantations; a ſubject, entirely ſuited to the wildneſs of Ovid's genius; and which, as appears from his relation of this ſtory in the Metamorphoſis, he knew not how to treat without running into ſome exceſs and luxuriance in that part. But whether this were the cauſe, or no, the very treating a ſubject, which had gone through ſuch hands, as Euripides, Ennius, and Ovid, was enough to expoſe a writer of better judgment, than Seneca, to

ſome hazard. For, in attempting to outdo originals, founded on the plan of ſimple nature, a writer is in the utmoſt danger of running into affectation and bombaſt. And indeed, without this temptation, our writers have generally found means to incur theſe exceſſes; moſt of them (except Skakeſpear and Otway) filling their plots with unnatural incidents, and heightening their characters into caracatures. Though it may be doubted, whether this hath been owing ſo much to their own ill taſte, as to a vicious compliance with that of the public; for, as one ſays, who well knew the expediency of this craft, and practiſed accordingly, *to write unnatural things is the moſt probable way of pleaſing them, who underſtand not nature.* [Dryd. Pref. to Mock Aſtrol.]

193. ACTORIS PARTES CHORUS, &c.] See alſo *Ariſtotle* [περ. ποιητ. κ. ιη.] The judgment of two ſuch critics, and the practice of wiſe antiquity concurring to eſtabliſh this precept concerning the Chorus, it ſhould thenceforth, one would think, have become a fundamental rule and maxim of the ſtage. And ſo indeed it has appeared to ſome few writers. The moſt admired of the French tragic poets ventured to introduce it into two of his latter plays, and with ſuch ſucceſs, that, as one obſerves, *It ſhould, in all reaſon, have diſabuſed his countrymen on this head: l'eſſai heureux de M. Racine, qui les* [*chœurs*] *a fait revivre dans* ATHALIE *et dans* ESTHER, *devroit, ce ſemble, nous avoir detrompez ſur cet article.* [P. Brumoi, v. i. p. 105.] And, before him, our *Milton*, who, with his other great talents, poſſeſſed a ſupreme knowledge of antiquity, was ſo ſtruck with its uſe and beauty, as to attempt to bring it into our language. His *Sampſon Agoniſtes* was, as might be expected, a maſterpiece. But even his credit hath not been ſufficient to reſtore the Chorus. Hear a late profeſſor of the art declaring, *De choro nihil diſſerui, quia non eſt eſſentialis dramati, atque à neotericis penitus* ET, ME JUDICE, MERITO REPUDIATUR. [Præl. Poet. v. ii. p. 188.] Whence it hath come to paſs, that the chorus hath been thus neglected is not now the inquiry. But that this critic, and all ſuch are greatly

greatly out in their judgments, when they preſume to cenſure it in the ancients, muſt appear (if we look no further) from the double uſe, inſiſted on by the poet. For, 1. A *chorus* interpoſing, and bearing a part in the progreſs of the action, gives the repreſentation that *probability* [a], and ſtriking reſemblance of real life, which every man of ſenſe perceives and *feels* the want of upon our ſtage; a want, which nothing but ſuch an expedient, as the chorus, can poſſibly relieve. And, 2. the importance of its other office [℣ 196] to the *utility* of the repreſentation, is ſo great, that, in a moral view, nothing can compenſate for this deficiency. For it is neceſſary to the truth and decorum of characters, that the *manners*, bad as well as good, be drawn in ſtrong, vivid colours, and to that end that immoral ſentiments, forcibly expreſſed and ſpeciouſly maintained, be ſometimes *imputed*. Hence the ſound philoſophy of the chorus will be conſtantly wanting to rectify the wrong concluſions of the audience, and prevent the ill impreſſions, that might otherwiſe be made upon it. Nor let any one ſay, that the audience is well able to do this for itſelf: Euripides did not find even an Athenian theatre ſo quick-ſighted. The ſtory is well known [Sen. Ep. 115] that when this faithful painter of the *manners* was obliged, by the rules of his art, and the character to be ſuſtained, to put a run of bold ſentiments in the mouth of one of his perſons, the people inſtantly took fire, charging the poet with the *imputed* villany, as though it had been his *own*. Now, if ſuch an audience could ſo eaſily miſinterpret an attention to the truth of character into the real doctrine of the poet, and this too, when a chorus was at hand to correct and diſabuſe their judgments, what muſt be the caſe, when the *whole* is left to the ſagacity and penetration of the people? The wiſer ſort, 'tis true, have little need of this information. Yet the reflections of ſober ſenſe on the courſe and occurrences of the repreſentation,

[a] *Quel avantage ne peut il [le poete] pas tirer d'une troupe d'acteurs, qui rempliſſent ſa ſcene, qui rendent plus ſenſible la continuité de l'action, et qui la font paroître plus* VRAISEMBLABLE, *puiſqu'il n'eſt pas naturel qu'elle ſe paſſe ſans temoins. On ne ſent que trop le vuide de notre Théatre ſans chœurs, &c.* [Le Théatre des Grecs, vol. i. p. 105.]

cloathed in the nobleſt dreſs of poetry, and inforced by the joint powers of *harmony* and *action* (which is the true character of the chorus) might make it, even to ſuch, a no unpleaſing or unprofitable entertainment. But theſe *two* are a ſmall part of the *uſes* of the chorus; which in every light is ſeen ſo important to the truth, decorum, and dignity of the tragic ſcene, that the *modern* ſtage, which hath not thought proper to adopt it, even with the advantage of, ſometimes, the juſteſt moral painting and ſublimeſt imagery, is but the fainteſt ſhadow of the *old*; as muſt needs appear to thoſe, who have looked into the antient models, or, diveſting themſelves of modern prejudices, are diſpoſed to conſult the dictates of plain ſenſe. For the uſe of ſuch I once deſigned to have drawn into one view the ſeveral important benefits, ariſing to the drama from the obſervance of this rule, but have the pleaſure to find myſelf prevented by a ſenſible diſſertation of a good French writer, which the reader will find *in the* VIII *Tom. of the hiſtory of the Academy of Inſcriptions and Belles Lettres.*

193. OFFICIUMQUE VIRILE] Heinſius takes *virile* adverbially for *viriliter*. But this is thought harſh. What hinders, but that it may be taken *adjectively?* And then, agreeably to his interpretation, *officium virile* will mean a ſtrenuous, diligent office, ſuch as becomes a perſon intereſted in the progreſs of the action. The precept is levelled againſt the practice of thoſe poets, who, though they allot the part of a *perſona dramatis* to the *chorus*, yet for the moſt part make it ſo idle and inſignificant an one, as is of little conſequence in the repreſentation: by which means the advantage of *probability*, intended to be drawn from this uſe of the *chorus*, is, in great meaſure, forfeited.

194. NEU QUID MEDIOS INTERCINAT ACTUS, QUOD NON PROPOSITO CONDUCAT ET HAEREAT APTE.] How neceſſary this advice might be to the writers of the Auguſtan age cannot certainly appear; but, if the practice of Seneca may afford any ſuſpicion, it ſhould ſeem to have been much wanted; in whom I ſcarcely believe there is one ſingle inſtance of the chorus being employed

ployed in a manner, conſonant to its true end and character. To ſupport this general cenſure, which may ſeem to bear hard on the poet, let us examine, in this view, one of the beſt of his plays, I mean, the Hippolytus; whoſe chorus, throughout, bears a very idle and unintereſting part — hath no ſhare in the action — and ſings impertinently.

At the end of the *firſt* act, when Phædra had avowed her paſſion for Hippolytus, inſtead of declaiming againſt her horrid purpoſe, enlarging on the danger and impiety of giving way to unnatural luſts, or ſomething of this nature, which was ſurely the office of the chorus, it expatiates wantonly, and with a poetic luxuriance, on the ſovereign, wide-extended powers of love.

In the cloſe of the *ſecond* act, inſtead of applauding the virtuous obſtinacy of Hippolytus, and execrating the mad attempt of Phædra, it coolly ſings the danger of beauty.

The *third* act contains the falſe accuſation of Hippolytus, and the too eaſy deception of Theſeus. What had the chorus to do here, but to warn againſt a too great credulity, and to commiſerate the caſe of the deluded father? Yet it declaims, in general, on the unequal diſtribution of *good* and *ill*.

After the *fourth* act, the chorus ſhould naturally have bewailed the fate of Hippolytus, and reverenced the myſterious conduct of providence in ſuffering the cruel deſtiny of the innocent. This, or ſomething like it, would have been to the purpoſe. But, as if the poet had never heard of this rule of *cohærence*, he harangues, in defiance of common ſenſe, on the inſtability of an high fortune, and the ſecurity of a low.

It will further juſtify this cenſure of *Seneca*, and be ſome amuſement to the critical reader, to obſerve, how the ſeveral blunders, here charged upon him, aroſe from an injudicious imitation of *Euripides*.

I. There are two places in the Greek Hippolytus, which Seneca ſeems to have had in view in his firſt chorus. We will conſider them both.

1. When the unhappy Phædra at length ſuffers the fatal ſecret of her paſſion to be extorted from her, ſhe falls, as

was natural, into all the horrors of ſelf-deteſtation, and determines not to ſurvive the confeſſion of ſo black a crime. In this conjuncture, the *nutrix*, who is not drawn, as in modern tragedy, an unmeaning confident, the mere depoſitary of the poet's ſecrets, but has real manners aſſigned to her, endeavours, with the higheſt beauty of character, to divert theſe horrid intentions, and mitigate, in ſome ſort, the guilt of her paſſion, by repreſenting to her the reſiſtleſs and all-ſubduing force of love. "Venus, "ſays this virtuous *monitrix*, is not to be withſtood, when "ſhe ruſhes upon us with all her power. Nor is any "part of creation vacant from her influence. She per-"vades the air and glides through the deeps. We, the "inhabitants of the earth, are all ſubject to her dominion. "Nay, aſk of the antient bards, and they will tell you, "that the Gods themſelves are under her controul." And ſo goes on, enumerating particular examples, from all which ſhe infers at laſt the neceſſity of Phædra's yielding to her fate. Again,

2. Towards the cloſe of the Greek play, when, upon receiving the tragical ſtory of his ſon's ſufferings, Theſeus began to feel his reſentments give way to the workings of parental affection, and, on that account, though he was willing to conceal the true motive, even from himſelf, had given orders for the dying Hippolytus to be brought before him, the chorus very properly flings out into that fine addreſs to Venus,

Σὺ τὰν θεῶν ἄκαμπτον φρένα, &c.

the ſubſtance of which is, "That Venus, with her ſwift-"winged boy, who traverſes the earth and ocean, ſubdues "the ſtubborn hearts of Gods and men; inſpiring into "all, on whom her influence reſts, whether inhabitants "of the land or deep, and more eſpecially the race of "man, a ſoft and ſympathyzing tenderneſs; demonſtrating "hereby, that ſhe alone extends her all-controuling do-"minion over univerſal nature." This ſong, as thus connected with the occaſion, is apparently very proper, and, when reduced from the pomp of lyric eloquence to plain proſe, is only an addreſs of congratulation to the powers

of

of love; confeſſing and celebrating their influence, in thus ſoftening the rigors of a father's hate, and awakening in his breaſt the ſoft touches of returning pity and affection.

Now theſe two places, taken together, are plainly the ground-work of that ſong,

Diva, non miti generata ponto, &c.

but how improperly applied, has appeared, in reſpect of the later of them, from what has been obſerved concerning the *occaſion*; and muſt be acknowledged of the other, from the different *character* of the perſon, to whom it is given; and alſo from hence, that the chorus in the Greek poet expreſsly condemns the impiety of ſuch ſuggeſtions in the nurſe, and admoniſhes Phædra not to lend an ear to them. The chorus, when it comes to ſing in him, is far otherwiſe employed; not in celebrating the triumphs, but deprecating the pernicious fury of this paſſion, and in lamenting the fatal miſcarriages of Hymeneal love.

II. The ſecond ſong on the graces of the prince's perſon, and the danger of beauty, which follows on the abrupt departure of Hippolytus, rejecting, with a virtuous diſdain, the mad attempts of Phædra, and her confidante, is ſo glaringly improper, as not to admit an excuſe from any example. And yet, I am afraid, the ſingle authority, it has to lean on, is a very ſhort hint, ſlightly dropped by the chorus in the Greek poet on a very different occaſion. It is in the entrance of that ſcene, where the mangled body of Hippolytus is brought upon the ſtage; on the ſight of which the chorus very naturally breaks out,

Καὶ μὲν ὁ τάλας ὅδε δὴ ςείχει
Σάρκας νεαρὰς
Ξανθόν τε κάρα διαλυμανθείς.

and yet, as the reader of juſt taſte perceives, nothing beyond a ſingle reflexion could have been endured even here.

III. The next ſong of the chorus may, to a common eye, appear directly copied from Euripides. Yet the two caſes will be found extremely different. In Seneca Theſeus, under the conviction of his ſon's guilt, inveighs bitterly againſt him, and at laſt ſupplicates the power of Neptune

tune to avenge his crimes. The chorus, as anticipating the effects of this imprecation, arraigns the juſtice of the Gods. In the Greek poet, the father, under the like circumſtances, invokes the ſame avenging power, and, as ſome immediate relief to his rage, pronounces the ſentence of baniſhment, and urges the inſtant execution of it, againſt him. Hippolytus, unable to contend any longer with his father's fury, breaks out into that moſt tender complaint (than which nothing was ever more affecting in tragedy)

Ἄρηρεν, ὡς ἔοικεν· ὦ τάλας ἐγώ. &c.

containing his laſt adieu to his country, companions, and friends. The chorus, touched with the pathos of this apoſtrophe, and commiſerating his ſad reverſe of fortune, enters with him into the ſame exceſs of lamentation, and, as the firſt expreſſion of it, lets fall this natural ſentiment, "That though from coolly contemplating the divine ſuper-"intendancy of human affairs, there reſults abundant confi-"dence and ſecurity againſt the ills of life, yet when we "look abroad into the lives and fortunes of men, that "confidence is apt to fail us, and we find ourſelves diſ-"couraged and confounded by the promiſcuous and un-"diſtinguiſhing appointments of *good* and *ill*." This is the thought, which Seneca hath imitated, and, as his manner is, outraged in his chorus of the third act.

O magna parens, Natura, Deûm, &c.

But the great difference lies here. That, whereas in *Euripides* this ſentiment is proper and agreeable to the ſtate and circumſtances of the chorus, which is ever attentive to the progreſs of the drama, and is moſt affected by what immediately preſents itſelf to obſervation; in *Seneca* it is quite foreign and impertinent, the attention of the chorus naturally turning, not on the diſtreſſes of Hippolytus, which had not yet commenced, but on the raſhneſs and unhappy deluſion of Theſeus, as being that, which had made the whole ſubject of the preceding ſcene. But the conſequence of that deluſion, it will be ſaid, was obvious. It may be ſo. But the chorus, as any ſenſible ſpectator, is moſt

moſt agitated by ſuch reflexions, as occur to the mind from thoſe ſcenes of the drama, which are actually paſſing before it, and not from thoſe, which lie, as yet, out of ſight.

IV. What was remarked of the *ſecond* ſong of the chorus will be applicable to the *fourth*, which is abſurdly founded on a ſingle reflexion in the Greek poet, but juſt touched in a couple of lines, though much more naturally introduced. Theſeus, plunged in the deepeſt affliction by the immature death of Phædra, and not enduring the ſight of the ſuppoſed guilty author of it, commands him into baniſhment, "Leſt, as he goes on, his former triumphs "and ſucceſſes againſt the diſturbers of mankind, ſhould, "in conſequence of the impunity of ſuch unprecedented "crimes, henceforth do him no honour." The chorus, ſtruck with the diſtreſsful ſituation of the old king, and recollecting with him the ſum of his former glories, is made to exclame,

Οὐκ οἶδ', ὅπως εἴποιμ' ἂν εὐτυχεῖν τινα
Θνητῶν· τὰ γὰρ δὴ πρῶτ' ἀνέστραπται πάλιν.

i. e. *there is henceforth no ſuch thing, as human happineſs, when the firſt examples of it are thus ſadly reverſed.* Which caſual remark Seneca ſeizes and extends through a whole chorus; where it viſibly ſerves to no other end, but to uſurp a place, deſtined for far more natural and affecting ſentiments.

If I have been rather long upon this head, it is becauſe I conceive this critique on the Hippolytus will let the reader, at once, into the true character of *Seneca*.

196. ILLE BONIS FAVEATQUE &c.] *The chorus*, ſays the poet, *is to take the ſide of the good and virtuous*, i. e. [ſee note on ẏ 193] is always to ſuſtain a moral character. But this will need ſome explanation and reſtriction. To conceive aright of its office, we muſt ſuppoſe the *chorus* to be a number of perſons, by ſome probable cauſe aſſembled together, as witneſſes and ſpectators of the great action of the drama. Such perſons, as they cannot be wholly unintereſted in what paſſes before them, will very naturally bear ſome ſhare in the repreſentation.

This

This will principally conſiſt in declaring their ſentiments, and indulging their reflexions freely on the ſeveral events and diſtreſſes, as they ſhall ariſe. Thus we ſee the *moral*, attributed to the chorus, will be no other, than the dictates of plain ſenſe; ſuch as muſt be obvious to every thinking obſerver of the action, who is under the influence of no peculiar partialities from *affection* or *intereſt*. Though even theſe may be ſuppoſed in caſes, where the character, towards which they *draw*, is repreſented as virtuous.

A chorus, thus conſtituted, muſt always, it is evident, take the part of virtue; becauſe this is the natural and almoſt neceſſary determination of mankind, in all ages and nations, when acting freely and unconſtrained. But then it is to be obſerved,

1. That this moral character, or approbation of virtue, muſt alſo be conſiderably influenced by the common and eſtabliſhed notions of *right* and *wrong*; which, though in eſſential points, for the moſt part, uniformly the ſame under all circumſtances, yet will, in ſome particular inſtances, be much diſtorted by the corrupt principles and practices of different countries and times. Hence the *moral* of the ſtage will not be always ſtrictly philoſophical; as reflecting to us the image, not of the ſage's ſpeculation, but, of the obvious ſenſe of common, untutored minds. The reader will find this obſervation applied to the caſe of the *chorus* in the Medea, in note on ϒ 200, and it might further, perhaps, be extended to the vindication of ſome others, to which the ignorant temerity of modern criticiſm hath taken occaſion to object. But,

2. The *moral character* of the chorus will not only depend very much on the ſeveral miſtaken notions and uſages, which may happen, under different circumſtances, to corrupt and defile *morality*; but allowance is alſo to be made for the *falſe policies*, which may prevail in different countries; and eſpecially if they conſtitute any part of the ſubject, which the drama would repreſent. If the *chorus* be made up of free citizens, whether of a republic, or the milder and more equal roialties, they can be under little or no temptation to ſuppreſs or diſguiſe their real ſentiments on the ſeveral events, preſented to their obſervation; but will be

be at liberty to purſue their natural inclination of ſpeaking the truth. But ſhould this venerable aſſembly, inſtead of ſuſtaining the dignity of free ſubjects, be, in fact, a company of ſlaves, devoted by long uſe to the ſervice and intereſts of a maſter, or awed, by the dread of tyrannical power, into an implicit compliance with his will, the baleful effect, which this very different ſituation muſt have on their moral character, is evident. Their opinions of perſons and things will ceaſe to be oracular; and the interpoſition of the *chorus* will be more likely to injure the cauſe of virtue, than to aſſiſt and promote it. Nor can any objection be made, on this account, to the conduct of the poet; who keeps to nature and probability in drawing the chorus with this imperfectly moral character; and is only anſwerable for his ill choice of a ſubject, in which ſuch a pernicious repreſentation is required. An inſtance will explane my meaning more perfectly. The chorus in the *Antigone*, contrary to the rule of Horace, takes the ſide of the *wicked*. It conſiſts of a number of old Thebans, aſſembled by the order of Creon to aſſiſt, or rather to be preſent, at a kind of a mock council; in which he meant to iſſue his cruel interdict of the rites of ſepulture to the body of Polynices; a matter of the higheſt conſequence in thoſe days, and upon which the whole diſtreſs of the play turns. This veteran troop of vaſſals enter at once into the horrid views of the tyrant, and obſequiouſly go along with him in the projects of his cruelty; calmly, and without the appearance of any virtuous emotion, conſenting to them all. The conſequence is, that the interludes of the chorus are, for the moſt part, impertinent, or ſomething worſe; cautiouſly avoiding ſuch uſeful reflexions, as the nature of the caſe muſt ſuggeſt, or indulging, by their flatteries, the impotent tyranny of their prince. And yet no blame can be fairly charged upon the great poet, who hath ſurely repreſented, in the moſt ſtriking colours, the pernicious character, which a chorus, under ſuch circumſtances, would naturally ſuſtain. The fault muſt therefore fall, where the poet manifeſtly intended to throw it, on the accurſed ſpirit of deſpotiſm; which extinguiſhes, or over-rules the ſuggeſtions of common ſenſe;

kills the very ſeeds of virtue, and perverts the moſt ſacred and important offices, ſuch as is that of the chorus, into the means and inſtruments of vice. The glory, which he deſigned, by this repreſentation, to reflect upon the government and policy of his own ſtate, is too glaring to be overlooked. And he hath artfully contrived to counteract any ill impreſſions on the minds of the people, from the proſtituted authority of the chorus, by charging them, in the perſons of Hæmon and Antigone, with their real motives and views. In all indifferent things, in which the paſſions or intereſts of their maſter were not concerned, even this chorus would, of courſe, preſerve a moral character. But we are to look for it no farther. This is the utmoſt verge and boundary of a ſlave's virtue. An important truth, which, among many greater and more momentous inſtructions, furniſhes this to the dramatic poet, "That, if he would apply the chorus to the uſes of a "ſound and uſeful moral, he muſt take his ſubjects, not "from the annals of deſpotic tyranny, but from the great "events, which occur in the records of free and equal "commonwealths."

200. ILLE TEGAT COMMISSA] This important advice is not always eaſy to be followed. Much indeed will depend on the choice of the ſubject, and the artful conſtitution of the fable. Yet, with all his care, the ableſt writer will ſometimes find himſelf embarraſſed by the chorus. I would here be underſtood to ſpeak chiefly of the moderns. For the antients, though it has not been attended to, had ſome peculiar advantages over us in this reſpect, reſulting from the principles and practices of thoſe times. For, as it hath been obſerved of the antient epic muſe, that ſhe borrowed much of her ſtate and dignity from the falſe *theology* of the pagan world, ſo, I think, may it be juſtly ſaid of the antient tragic, that ſhe has derived great advantages of probability from its miſtaken *moral*. If there be truth in this reflection, it will help to juſtify ſome of the antient choirs, that have been moſt objected to by the moderns. To give an inſtance or two, and leave

leave the curious reader to extend the obſervation at his leiſure.

I. In the Hippolytus of Euripides, the chorus, which is let into Phædra's deſign of killing herſelf, ſuffers this raſh attempt to take effect, rather than divulge the entruſted ſecret. This, to a modern reader, ſeems ſtrange; and we are ready to arraign the poet of having allotted a very unfit and unbecoming part to his *chorus*, which, in order to obſerve a critical, is thus made to violate a moral precept, or at leaſt to ſacrifice the more eſſential part of its character to a punctilio of honour. But the caſe was quite otherwiſe. This ſuicide of Phædra, which, on our ſtricter moral plan, is repugnant to the plain rules of duty, was, in the circumſtances ſuppoſed, fully juſtified on the pagan ſyſtem. Phædra had confeſſed the ſecret of her criminal paſſion. By the forward zeal of her confident, her diſgrace is made known to Hippolytus; and thereby, as ſhe conceives, rendered notorious to the public. In this diſtreſs ſhe had only one way to vindicate her honour, and that was at the expence of her life. Rather than bear the inſupportable load of public infamy, ſhe kills herſelf. That this was a juſtifiable cauſe of ſelf-murder in the eye of the chorus is clear from the reaſon, there aſſigned, of her conduct, manifeſtly in approbation of it. "Phædra, ſays the chorus, "oppreſſed and born down by her afflictions, has recourſe "to this expedient of ſuicide,

τάν τ' εὔδοξον ἀνθαιρεμένα
Φάμαν, ἀπαλλάσσεσά
Τ' ἀλγεινὸν φρενῶν ἔρωτα.

"for the ſake of her good fame, and in order to free herſelf "from the tortures of a cruel paſſion." And how agreeable this was to the pagan ſyſtem, in general, let the reader collect from the following teſtimonies in Cicero: *Si omnia fugiendæ turpitudinis adipiſcendæque honeſtatis cauſâ faciemus, non modo ſtimulos doloris, ſed etiam fulmina fortunæ contemnamus licebit: præſertim cum paratum ſit illud ex heſternâ diſputatione perfugium. Ut enim ſi cui naviganti prædones inſequantur, Deus quis dixerit, Ejice te navi; præſto eſt, qui excipiat,* &c. *omnem omittas timorem; ſic urgentibus*

gentibus aſperis et odioſis doloribus, ſi tanti non ſit, ut ferendi ſint, quo ſit confugiendum vides. [Tuſc. Diſp. L. ii. 26.] And, again, in the cloſe of the Vth diſputation, *Mihi quidem in vita ſervanda videtur illa lex, quæ in Græcorum conviviis obtinet: Aut bibat, inquit, aut abeat. Et recte. Aut enim fruatur aliquis pariter cum aliis voluptate potandi; aut, ne ſobrius in violentiam vinolentorum incidat, ante diſcedat: ſi* INJURIAS FORTUNÆ, QUAS FERRE NEQUEAS, DEFUGIENDO RELINQUAS.

II. Another example may, I think, be fetched from the *Medea*. Scarcely any thing has been more the ſubject of modern cenſure, than the part, which the chorus is made to act in this tragedy. *Whence comes it*, ſays M. Dacier, *that the chorus, which conſiſts of Corinthian women, is faithful to a ſtranger againſt their ſovereign*[a]*?* This good Frenchman, it ſeems, thought it a kind of treaſon, even on the ſtage, and where a moral character was to be ſuſtained, to take part againſt a tyrant. But he will further ſay, that the moral character of the chorus was forfeited in thus concealing, and, in effect, abetting the impious cruelties of

[a] See alſo to the ſame purpoſe P. Corneille's *Exam. ſur la Medée*. If the objection, made by theſe critics, to the part of the chorus, be, *the improbability*, as was explained at large in the preceding note, *of a ſlave's taking the ſide of virtue againſt the pleaſure of his tyrant*, the manifeſt difference of the two caſes will ſhew it to be without the leaſt foundation. For 1. the chorus in the Medea conſiſts of women, whom compaſſion and a ſecret jealouſy and indignation at ſo flagrant an inſtance of the violated faith of marriage, attach, by the moſt natural connexion of intereſts, to the cauſe and perſon of the injured queen. In the Antigone, it is compoſed of old courtiers, devoted, by an habitude of ſlavery, to the will of a maſter, aſſembled, by his expreſs appointment, as creatures of his tyranny, and prompted, by no ſtrong movements of ſelf-love, to take part againſt him. 2. In the Antigone, the part of Creon is *principal*. Every ſtep, in the progreſs of the play, depends ſo immediately upon him, that he is almoſt conſtantly upon the ſtage. No reflexions could therefore be made by the chorus, nor any part againſt him be undertaken, but directly in his preſence, and at their own manifeſt hazard. The very reverſe of this is the caſe in the Medea. Creon is there but a ſubaltern perſon — has a very ſmall part aſſigned him in the conduct of the play — is, in fact, introduced upon the ſtage but in one ſingle ſcene. The different ſituation of the chorus, reſulting from hence, gives occaſion for the wideſt difference in their conduct. They may ſpeak their reſentments freely. No inſtant terrors counteract their natural feelings. Unawed by the frowns and menaces of their tyrant, they are left at liberty to follow the ſuggeſtions of virtue. Nothing here offends againſt the law of probability, or, in the leaſt, contradicts the reaſoning about the chorus in the Antigone.

Medea.

Medea. *The laws of nature and of God were tranſgreſſed in rendering this ſervice to her.* All which is very true, ſuppoſing the reader to judge of this matter by the purer chriſtian moral. But how will he prove this to be the caſe on the received notions and practices of paganiſm? It appears, this critic did not apprehend, what a moderate attention to ancient hiſtory and manners might have taught him, that the violation of conjugal fidelity was a crime of that high nature, as to deſerve in the public opinion, and excuſe, the ſevereſt vengeance of retaliation. This the laws expreſly allowed to the injuries of the huſband. And, it is probable, the wife might incline to think the reaſon of the caſe extended alſo to her. What is certain is, that we find ſome of the deepeſt ſcenes of horror, which antient hiſtory furniſhes, or antient fiction could paint, wrought up from the occaſion of this neglect of conjugal faith. And it is well obſerved by one, in ſpeaking of the difference between the antient and modern ſtage, that what is now held the fit ſubject of comic mirth and ridicule in chriſtian theatres, was never employed but to ſtir up the utmoſt horror and commiſeration, on the heathen. "We "do not find, ſays this agreeable writer, any comedy in "ſo polite an author, as Terence, raiſed upon the viola- "tions of the marriage-bed. The falſhood of the wife "or huſband has given occaſion to noble tragedies; but "a Scipio and Lælius would have looked upon inceſt or "murder, to have been as proper ſubjects for comedy." This is ſtrictly and preciſely the truth. And, therefore, as the crimes of inceſt or murder were believed deſerving of the higheſt puniſhment by the Pagans, and every good man was ready to intereſt himſelf in ſeeing it inflicted[a]; ſo, in the caſe of the open violation of the marriage-compact, the fierceſt acts of revenge were juſtified in the public opinion, and paſs'd only for acts of ſtrict juſtice. And for this, if we wanted further authority, we have the expreſs word of the chorus. The Corinthian women do not barely conſent to ſecrecy, in virtue of an extorted

[a] See *n.* on ℣ 127.

oath or promiſe (tho' more might have been ſaid for this, than every reader is aware of) but in conſequence of their entire and full approbation of her intentions. For thus, in anſwer to Medea's petition to them, without the leaſt reſerve or heſitation, they are made to reply,

Δρᾶσω τάδ'· ἐνδίκως γὰρ ἐκτίσῃ πόσιν
Μήδεια.

I will do it; for this revenge on a huſband is juſt. Is it to be imagined that, conſidering the captious temper of an Athenian auditory, the poet would have ventured on this aſſertion, and, in a manner, ſanctified it, by putting it in the mouth of his *chorus*, if the general opinion, at leaſt, had not aſſented to the truth of it? We ſee then the chorus, in keeping the ſecret of Medea's murders, was employed in its great office of countenancing and ſupporting *ſalubrem juſtitiam, wholeſome juſtice.* And, therefore, the ſcholiaſt, with M. Dacier's leave, gave a fit and proper account of the matter (ſo far was it from being *impious* and *ridiculous*) in ſaying, *that the Corinthian women being free*, i. e. not devoted to the ſervice of Creon, by the ſpecial duties of any perſonal attachment, *take the ſide of juſtice, as the chorus is wont to do on other occaſions.* The circumſtance of their *freedom* is properly mention'd. For this diſtinguiſhes their care from that of the *nutrix*, who, upon receiving the account of Jaſon's cruelties, cries out,

Ὄλοιτο μὲν μή, δεσπότης γάρ ἐς' ἐμοὺς,
Ἀτὰρ κακός γ' ὢν εἰς φίλους ἀλίσκεται.

And that the chorus enter'd into Medea's deſigns againſt her huſband, the tyrant Creon, and her rival, on reaſons of juſtice and equity only, and not (as is haſtily believed by ſome, who have not enough attended to the decorum of the antient tragedy, for the ſake of forwarding the poet's plot) may be certainly ſhewn. For when, in the fury of her reſentments, and as the full completion of her revenge, the mother comes to propoſe the murder of her innocent children, the chorus ſtarts with horror at the thought, diſſuades her from it in the moſt earneſt and affecting

affecting manner[a], and ſeems to have concealed the dreadful ſecret only from the perſuaſion, that it was too horrid and unnatural to be perpetrated. The reader will collect this with pleaſure, by turning to the fine ſong, which follows. It may be further obſerv'd, that Medea herſelf, in opening this laſt purpoſe of her rage to the chorus, exacts fidelity of them only, *as they wiſh'd well to an injur'd queen, and were women*;

Εἴπερ φρονεῖς εὖ δεσπόταις, γυνή τ' ἔφυς.

which is beautifully contrived by the poet, to diſcriminate the two caſes, and to intimate to us, that reaſons of juſtice were now no longer to be pleaded.

In ſum, though theſe acts of ſevere avenging juſtice might not be according to the expreſs letter of the laws, or the more refined concluſions of the PORCH or ACADEMY; yet there is no doubt, that they were, in the general account, eſteemed fit and reaſonable. And, it is to be obſerved, in order to paſs a right judgment on the antient chorus, that, though in virtue of their office, they were obliged univerſally to ſuſtain a moral character; yet this moral was rather political and popular, than ſtrictly legal or philoſophic. Which is alſo founded on good reaſon. The ſcope and end of the antient theatre being to ſerve the intereſts of virtue and ſociety, on the principles and ſentiments, already ſpread and admitted amongſt the people, and not to correct old errors, and inſtruct them in philoſophic truth.

202. TIBIA NON UT NUNC ORICHALCO, &c.] [from ℣ 202 to ℣ 220.] This is one of thoſe many paſſages in the epiſtle, about which the critics have ſaid a great deal, without explaining any thing. In ſupport of what I mean to offer, as the true interpretation, I obſerve,

I. That the poet's intention certainly was, not to cenſure the *falſe* refinements of their ſtage-muſic; but, in a

[a] *For her own ſake,* as is pleaded, *and in obedience to the laws,*

Σέ τ' ὠφελῶν θέλησα, καὶ νόμοις βροτῶν
Ξυλλαμβάνεσθα, δρᾷν σ' ἀπεννέπω τάδε. ℣ 812.

which ſhews, that the other murders were not againſt the ſpirit of the laws, whatever became of the letter of them.

ſhort digreſſive hiſtory (ſuch as the didactic form will ſometimes require) to deſcribe the riſe and progreſs of the *true*. This I collect, 1. From *the expreſſion itſelf*; which cannot, without violence, be underſtood in any other way. For, as to the words *licentia* and *præceps*, which have occaſioned much of the difficulty, the *firſt* means a *freer uſe*, not a *licentiouſneſs*, properly ſo called; and the *other* only expreſſes a vehemence and rapidity of language, naturally productive of a quicker elocution, ſuch as muſt of courſe attend the more numerous harmony of the lyre:—not, as M. Dacier tranſlates it, *une eloquence temeraire et outrée*, an extravagant ſtraining and affectation of ſtyle. 2. From *the reaſon of the thing*; which makes it incredible, that the muſic of the theatre ſhould then be moſt complete, when the times were barbarous, and entertainments of this kind little encouraged or underſtood. 3. From *the character of that muſic itſelf*; for the rudeneſs of which, Horace, in effect, apologizes in defending it only on the ſcore of the imperfect ſtate of the ſtage, and the ſimplicity of its judges. This then being clear, I obſerve:

II. That thoſe two verſes

[*Indoctus quid enim ſaperet liberque laborum,*
Ruſticus urbano confuſus, turpis honeſto?]

are, as they now ſtand, utterly inexplicable. This hath appeared long ſince, from the fruitleſs labours of the critics, and, above all, of Lambin, one of the beſt of them; who, after ſeveral repeated efforts to elucidate this place, leaves it juſt as dark and unintelligible as he found it. *Horum verborum*, ſays that learned Commentator, *hanc ſententiam eſſe puto. Neque vero mirum eſt, hanc licentiam et luxuriem, quæ ab antiquorum ſeveritate tam longè abeſſet, et ab arte comica tantopere diſcreparet, fuiſſe a populo probatam ac receptam. Quæ enim ſapientia eſſet in ruſticis et indoctis et labore ſolutis et turpibus hominibus cum populo urbano confuſis? Alii ſic: Neque vero mirum eſt hanc numerorum et modorum licentiam a ruſticis eſſe probatam, aut vero toleratam. quid enim ſaperet ruſticus, ab opere ſolutus, &c. id eſt, quid enim proficeret, ſi plus ſapere videri vellet, quam urbanus*

urbanus et honeſtus? vel quid ſaperet, id eſt, quantum ſaperet? quaſi dicat, ut inſipientes ejicerentur ruſtici, ſi urbanorum luxuriem ac licentiam improbarent et condemnarent? vel quid, i. e. propter quid, ſeu quamobrem ſapere vellet? &c. That is, the learned critic *would* explain it if he *could*. But a little attention might have ſhewn him the deſign was impracticable. For, taking the poet's intention to be, as hath been explained, the lines have apparently no ſenſe: and, on their interpretation, who make it, not an encomium on the *true*, but a cenſure of the *falſe* refinements of the *Tibia*, in reality, as little. For, 1. Was this an effect to be attributed to a mixture of Ruſtics and Citizens? An affected delicacy in muſic is the genuine reſult of affected and delicate manners; not of a vicious compliance with the rude taſte of the people. 2. This degenerate taſte, as proceeding from the intermixture of the ruſtic rabble, can leaſt of all be underſtood of the Roman theatre, which always abounded in this ſort; and the more ſo, the further we look back, till, in the earlier times, it conſiſted of little elſe. The *veſtigia ruris* were, we know, imprinted long before the wide extent of the Roman conqueſts. Yes, but ſays the critic, [Lambin. loc. cit.] *Quid ſaperet*, i. e. *who could expect a reform of the licentious taſte of the citizen and the better ſort—urbani & honeſti, from the deſpiſed ruſtic?* To which can only be replied, that, if any did indeed expect a reform from that quarter, they may perhaps take this for an anſwer. I conclude, on the reaſons here given, that the lines in queſtion are either *ſpurious*; or, if that is not allowed, are certainly *miſplaced*. What other *poſition* may better ſuit them, will be conſidered. [See *n.* on ℣ 225.] The interpretation, without them, ſtands thus. "The Tibia, ſays the "poet, was at firſt *low* and *ſimple*. The *firſt*, as beſt "agreeing to the then *ſtate of the ſtage*, which requir'd "only a ſoft muſic to go along with, and aſſiſt the cho-"rus; there being no large and crowded theatres to *fill* "in thoſe days. And the *latter*, as ſuiting beſt to the "then *ſtate of the times*; whoſe ſimplicity and frugal "manners exacted the ſevereſt temperance, as in every "thing elſe, ſo, in their dramatic ornaments and decora-

" tions. But, when conqueſt had enlarged the territory, " and widen'd the walls of Rome; and, in conſequence " thereof, a ſocial ſpirit had diſpelled that ſeverity of man- " ners, by the introduction of frequent feſtival ſolemni- " ties; then, as was natural to expect, a freer and more " varied harmony took place. And thus it was, that the " *Tibicen*, the muſician, who played to the declamation in " the acts, inſtead of the rude and ſimpler ſtrain of the " old times, gave a richneſs and variety of tone; and, in- " ſtead of the old inactive poſture, added the grace of " motion to his art. Juſt in the ſame manner, continues " he, it happened to the *Lyre*, i. e. *the muſic in the chorus*, " which originally, as that of the *Tibia*, was ſevere and " ſimple; but, by degrees, acquired a quicker and more " expreſſive modulation, ſuch as correſponded to the more " elevated and paſſionate turn of the poet's ſtyle, and the " diviner enthuſiaſm of his ſentiment." All that is fur- ther wanting to ſupport and juſtify this interpretation, will be found in the notes on particular paſſages.

203. TENUIS SIMPLEXQUE &c.] It may here be ob- ſerved of the manner, in which the poet hath choſen to deliver this whole part [from ℣ 201 to 295] that, beſides its other uſes, it tends directly to convey to his readers, and impreſs upon them in the ſtrongeſt manner, the principal inſtruction, he has in view, and with which the epiſtle more expreſsly concludes, *viz. The uſes and importance of a ſpirit of critical application.* For, in ſpeaking of the *ſtage muſic*, of the *ſatyrs*, and the *Greek tragedy* (all which come naturally in his way, and are very artfully connected) he chuſes to deduct the account of each from its ruder and leſs poliſh'd original; tracing it through its ſeveral ſucceſſive ſtages, and marking out to us the gradual poliſh and refinement, which it acquired from increaſing diligence and correctneſs. The *Tibia* at firſt was *ſimple* and *rude* — The *ſaytrs naked* and *barbarous*, and the *Greek tragedy itſelf deformed and ſhapeleſs* in the court of Theſpis. Care and attention reform'd each. It follows,

Nil intentatum noſtri liquere poetæ, &c.

i. e. our poets have not been wanting in their attempts to excel

excel in theſe ſeveral particulars. What is neceſſary to their ſucceſs is, *limæ labor et mora*. If the reader bears this in mind, it will help him to ſee the order and ſcope of this part more diſtinctly.

204. ASPIRARE ET ADESSE CHORIS &c.] *Chorus* here means the whole dramatic performance, which was originally nothing elſe.

206. UTPOTE PARVUS, ET FRUGI CASTUSQUE VERECUNDUSQUE &c.] M. *Dacier* finds here *four* cauſes *of the little regard the antients had for plays* [he ſhould have ſaid, of their being ſatisfy'd with the *Tibia*, all rude and ſimple as is here deſcribed] *la premiere, que le peuple Romain étoit encore alors en petit nombre: la ſeconde, qu'il étoit ſage: la troiſiéme, qu'il étoit chaſte, c'eſt à dire pieux: & la quatrieme, qu'il étoit modeſte.* All which, except the firſt, in which he could not miſtake, are palpable blunders. For the three laſt epithets are in truth ſynonymous, all of them expreſſing what, though he gueſſed at thrice, he had the ill fortune to miſs at laſt, *that plainneſs and ſimplicity* of character, *that frugal reſerve and moderation in the uſe of any thing*, which ſo eſſentially belongs to rude minds, uninſtructed in the arts of life. His *four* cauſes are, in fact, then but two; which have been fully conſidered in the preceding note.

211. ACCESSIT NUMERISQUE MODISQUE LICENTIA MAJOR.] M. *Dacier* is *out* again, when he takes *licentia major* in a bad ſenſe, as implying *laſciveté, a culpable and licentious refinement.* The *licence*, here ſpoken of, with regard to *numbers* and *ſounds*, like that in another place, which reſpects *words* [l. 51.] is one of thoſe, which is allowed, when *ſumpta pudenter.* The comparative *major*, which is a *palliative*, ſhews this; and is further juſtified by a like paſſage in *Cicero De Oratore* [l. iii. c. 48.] where ſpeaking of this very licence in poetry, he obſerves, that out of the Heroic and Iambic meaſure, which were at firſt ſtrictly obſerved, there aroſe by degrees the Anapæſt, *procerior quidam numerus, & ille licentior & divitior Dithyrambus*; evidently not condemning this change,

but oppoſing it to the rigorous and confined meaſure of the elder poets. But the expreſſion itſelf occurs in the piece entitled *Orator*, in which, comparing the freedoms of the poetical and oratorial ſtyle, *in ea* [i. e. *poetica*] ſays he, *licentiam ſtatuo majorem eſſe, quam in nobis faciendorum jungendorumque verborum.* The poet ſays, this *licence* extended *numeris modiſque*, the former of which words will expreſs that *licence of metre*, ſpoken of by *Cicero*, and which is farther explained ℣ 256, *&c.* where an account is given of the improvement of the Iambic verſe.

214. SIC PRISCÆ, — — — ARTI
TIBICEN, *&c.*
SIC FIDIBUS ETIAM, *&c.*

This is the application of what had been ſaid, in general, concerning the refinement of theatrical muſic to the caſe of *tragedy*. Some commentators ſay, and to *comedy*. But in this they miſtake, as will appear preſently. M. *Dacier* hath, I know not what conceit about a compariſon betwixt the *Roman* and *Greek* ſtage. His reaſon is, *that the lyre was uſed in the Greek chorus, as appears*, he ſays, *from Sophocles playing upon this inſtrument himſelf in one of his tragedies.* And was it not uſed too in the Roman chorus, as appears from Nero's playing upon it in ſeveral tragedies? But the learned critic did not apprehend this matter. Indeed from the caution, with which his guides, the dealers in antiquities, always touch this point, it ſhould ſeem, that they too had no very clear conceptions of it. The caſe I take to have been this: The *Tibia*, as being moſt proper to accompany the declamation of the acts, *cantanti ſuccinere*, was conſtantly employed, as well in the Roman tragedy as comedy. This appears from many authorities. I mention only two from Cicero. *Quam multa* [Acad. l. ii. 7.] *quæ nos fugiunt in cantu, exaudiunt in eo genere exercitati: Qui, primo inflatu Tibicinis, Antiopam eſſe aiunt aut Andromacham, cum nos ne ſuſpicemur quidem.* The other is ſtill more expreſs. In his piece, entitled *Orator*, ſpeaking of the negligence of the Roman writers, in reſpect of *numbers*, he obſerves, *that there were even many paſſages in their tragedies, which, unleſs*

leſs the TIBIA *played to them, could not be diſtinguiſhed from mere proſe: quæ, niſi cum Tibicen acceſſerit, orationi ſint ſolutæ ſimillima.* One of theſe paſſages is expreſsly quoted from *Thyeſtes*, a tragedy of Ennius; and, as appears from the meaſure, taken out of one of the poets. It is clear then, that the *Tibia* was certainly uſed in the *declamation* of tragedy. But now the ſong of the tragic chorus, being of the nature of the ode, of courſe required *Fides*, the lyre, the peculiar and appropriated inſtrument of the lyric Muſe. And this is clearly collected, if not from expreſs teſtimonies; yet from ſome occaſional hints dropt by the antients. For 1. the lyre, we are told, [Cic De Leg. ii. 9 & 15] and is agreed on all hands, was an inſtrument of the Roman theatre; but it was not employed in comedy. This we certainly know from the ſhort accounts of the muſic prefixed to Terence's plays. 2. Further, the *Tibicen*, as we ſaw, accompanied the declamation of the acts in tragedy. It remains then, that the proper place of the lyre was, where one ſhould naturally look for it, in the ſongs of the chorus; but we need not go farther than this very paſſage for a proof. It is unqueſtionable, that the poet is here ſpeaking of the chorus only; the following lines not admitting any other poſſible interpretation. By *Fidibus* then is neceſſarily underſtood the inſtrument peculiarly uſed in it[a]. In this view, the whole digreſſion is more pertinent and connects better. The poet had before been ſpeaking of tragedy. All his directions, from l. 100, reſpect this ſpecies of the drama only. The application of what he had ſaid concerning muſic, is then moſt naturally made, 1. to the *Tibia*, the muſic of the acts; and, 2. to *Fides*, that of the choir: thus confining himſelf, as the tenor of this part required, to tragedy only. Hence is ſeen the miſtake, not only of M. Dacier, whoſe comment is in every view inſupportable; but, as was hinted, of Heinſius, Lambin, and others, who, with more probability, explained

a Not that I contend that the *Tibia* was never uſed in the chorus. The contrary ſeems expreſſed in a paſſage of Seneca, [Ep. lxxxiv.] and in Julius Pollux [L. iv. 15. § 107.] 'Tis ſufficient, if the *lyre* was uſed ſolely, or principally at this time in it.

this

this of the Roman comedy and tragedy. For though *Tibia* might be allowed to ſtand for comedy, as oppoſed to *Tragœdia*, [as in fact, we find it in 11. Ep. 1. 98.] that being the only inſtrument employed in it; yet in ſpeaking expreſsly of the muſic of the ſtage, *Fides* could not determinately enough, and in contradiſtinction to *Tibia*, denote that of tragedy, it being an inſtrument uſed ſolely, or principally in the chorus; of which, the context ſhews, he alone ſpeaks. It is further to be obſerved, that in the application here made, beſides the muſic, the poet takes in the other improvements of the tragic chorus, theſe happening, as from the nature of the thing they muſt, at the ſame time.

214. SIC PRISCAE MOTUMQUE ET LUXURIEM] Theſe two words are employed to expreſs that *quicker movement*, and *richer modulation* of the new muſic; the peculiar defects of the *old* being, 1. That it moved too ſlowly, and 2. That it had no compaſs or variety of notes. It was that *movement*, that velocity and vehemence of the muſic, which Roſcius required to have ſlackened in his old age.

215. TRAXITQUE VAGUS PER PULPITA VESTEM.] This expreſſes not only the improvement ariſing from the ornament of proper dreſſes, but from the grace of motion: not only the *actor*, whoſe peculiar office it was, but the *minſtrel* himſelf, as appears from hence, conforming his geſture in ſome ſort to the muſic [a].

216.

a Of the uſe and propriety of theſe geſtures, or dances, it will not be eaſy for us, who ſee no ſuch thing attempted in the modern ſtage, to form any very clear and exact notions. What we cannot doubt of is, 1. That the ſeveral theatrical dances of the antients were ſtrictly conformable to the genius of the different ſpecies of compoſition, to which they were applied. 2. That, therefore, the tragic dance, which more eſpecially accompanied the chorus, muſt have been expreſſive of the higheſt gravity and decorum, tending to inſpire ideas of what is *becoming*, *graceful*, and *majeſtic*; in which view we cannot but perceive the important aſſiſtance, it muſt needs lend to virtue, and how greatly it muſt contribute to ſet all her graces and attractions in the faireſt light. 3. This idea of the antient tragic dance, is not ſolely formed upon our knowledge of the conformity, before mentioned; but is further collected from the name, uſually given to it, which was Εμμέλεια,

216. SIC FIDIBUS ETIAM VOCES etc.] He is here ſpeaking of the great improvement in the tragic chorus, after the Roman conqueſts, when the Latin writers began to enquire

Quid Sophocles & Theſpis & Æſchylus utile ferrent.

This improvement conſiſted, 1. In a more inſtructive moral ſentiment: 2. In a more ſublime and animated expreſſion; which of courſe produced, 3. A greater vehemence in the declamation: to which conformed, 4. A more numerous and rapid muſic. All theſe particulars are here expreſſed, but, as the reaſon of the thing required, in an inverted order. The muſic of the lyre (that being his ſubject and introducing the reſt) being placed firſt, the declamation, as attending that, next; the language, *facundia*, that is, the ſubject of the declamation, next; and the ſentiment, *ſententia*, the ground and baſis of the language laſt.

Et tulit eloquium inſolitum facundia præceps.

literally, "A vehemence and rapidity of language pro-"duced an unuſual vehemence and rapidity of elocution "in the declamer[a]!" *Unaccuſtom'd* is indifferently a *cenſure* or *encomium*, according as the preceding ſtate of the thing ſpoken of was *wrong*, or *right*. Much the ſame may be obſerved of *præceps*; its *literal* ſenſe is a degree of *motion* in any thing above what it had before. This may be *exceſſive*, or otherwiſe, as it chances: When apply'd to *the bleak Eaſt wind, diſperſing a flight of bees, and daſhing them in the ſtream*,

ſi forte morantes
Sparſerit aut præceps Neptuno immerſerit Eurus.
Virg. Georg. iv. 29.

the epithet implies *exceſs*; but when ſpoken of the *gentle South, whoſe ſtrongeſt gale is but ſufficient to drive the*

μέλεια. This word cannot well be tranſlated into our language; but expreſſes all that grace and concinnity of motion, which the dignity of the choral ſong required. 4. Laſtly, it muſt give us a very high notion of the moral effect of this dance, when we find the ſevere Plato admitting it into his commonwealth.

a This "rapidity of language" is exactly the ſame, as that Cicero ſpeaks of in Democritus and Plato, [Orat. 638. Eb.] which, becauſe of its quick and rapid movement, *quod incitatius teratur*, ſome critics thought to be poetical.

willing ſhip to port, [Æn. vii. 410.] *Præcipiti delata Noto*, it then only expreſſes *due proportion*.

As for the criticiſm from Quintilian, who oppoſes *præcipitia* to *ſublimibus*, it is doubly impertinent: 1. As the ſenſe is neceſſarily fix'd by its oppoſition to *ſublimibus*; and 2. As the word is here uſed, not as implying *motion*, but *height*, in which view its ſenſe is *abſolute*, and always denotes *exceſs*.

218. UTILIUMQUE SAGAX RERUM, ET DIVINA FUTURI, SORTILEGIS NON DISCREPUIT SENTENTIA DELPHIS.] It is amazing that theſe two lines ſhould ever have been miſunderſtood, as a cenſure, the import of them being highly *encomiaſtic*, yet with great exactneſs declaring the ſpecific boaſt and excellence of the Chorus; which lay, as Heinſius hath well obſerv'd, 1. In inculcating important moral leſſons; and 2. In delivering uſeful preſages and monitions concerning future conduct, with an almoſt oracular prudence and authority.

SIC PRICSAE — — — ARTI.

What hath chiefly miſled the Critics in their explanation of this place, I ſuſpect to have been the frequent encomiums on the ſeverity of the ancient muſic, by the Greek and Latin writers. Tho' here they ſeem to have overlook'd two very material conſiderations: 1. That the *former* have chiefly treated the ſubject in a *moral* or *political* view, and therefore preferred the ancient muſic only as it was conceived to influence the public manners. For this reaſon Plato, one of the chief of thoſe *encomiaſts*, applauds, as we find, the practice of Ægypt, in ſuffering no change of her poetry, but continuing, to his time, her fondneſs for the *Songs of Iſis* [De Leg. l. ii. ſub. init.] which juſt as much infers the perfection of thoſe ſongs, conſider'd in a critical view, as Rome's ſticking to her *Saliar verſes* would have ſhewn thoſe poor, obſcure oriſons to have exceeded the regular odes and artificial compoſitions of Horace. 2. That the *later*, the principal of them at leaſt, who talk in the ſame ſtrain, liv'd under the Emperors; in whoſe time, indeed, muſic had undergone a miſerable proſtitution, *being broken*, as one of

of the beſt of thoſe writers complains, *into an effeminate and impure delicacy—In ſcenis effeminata et impudicis modis fracta*, [Quint. 1. L. x.] As to the times in queſtion, I know of but one paſſage, which clearly and expreſly condemns the muſic then in vogue; and that will admit of ſome alleviation from its being found in a treatiſe concerning laws. The paſſage I mean is in Cicero, [De Leg. 2. L. xvi.] who, following Plato in his high-flown principles of legiſlation, exclames, *Illa quæ ſolebant quondam compleri ſeveritate jucunda Livianis & Nævianis modis; nunc ut eadem exultent, cervices oculoſque pariter cum* MODORUM FLEXIONIBUS *torqueant!* For the *ſeveritas jucunda* of the muſic, to which Livius's plays were ſet, it may be tolerably gueſſed from hence, that he was the *firſt* who brought a written Play upon the ſtage; *i. e.* the firſt writer, whoſe plays were acted to a regular and precompoſed muſic. And it is not, we know, very uſual for the firſt eſſays in any art to be perfect. It ſhould ſeem then, that the *flexiones modorum*, as oppos'd to the plainneſs of the old muſic, are here condemned, not ſo much in the view of a critic, eſtimating the true ſtate of the ſtage; but, as was hinted of a legiſlator, treading in the ſteps of Plato. Though indeed I have no doubt, that the muſic in thoſe times was much changed, and had even ſuffered ſome degree of corruption. This I infer, not ſo much from any expreſs authorities that have occurred, as from the general ſtate of thoſe times, which were degenerating apace into the worſt morals, the ſure forerunners of a corrupt and vitiated muſic; for, though it may indeed, in its turn, and doubtleſs does, when eſtabliſhed, contribute much to help on the public depravity, yet that depravity itſelf is originally not the *effect*, but the *cauſe* of a bad muſic; as is more than hinted to be Cicero's real opinion in the place referred to, where obſerving, that the manners of many Greek ſtates, had kept pace with their muſic; he adds, that they had undergone this change, *Aut hac dulcedine corruptelaque depravati, ut quidam putant; aut cum ſeveritas eorum ob alia vitia cecidiſſet, tum fuit in auribus animiſque mutatis etiam huic mutationi locus.* [Leg. xi. 15.] But be this as it will, Horace, as

we

we have ſeen, is no way concerned in the diſpute about the ancient muſic.

219. SENTENTIA DELPHIS.] *Sententia* is properly *an aphoriſm taken from life, briefly repreſenting either what is, or what ought to be the conduct of it: Oratio ſumpta de vita, quæ aut quid ſit aut quid eſſe oporteat in vita, breviter oſtendit.* [Ad. Herenn. Rhet. L. iv.] Theſe aphoriſms are here mentioned, as conſtituting the peculiar praiſe and beauty of the chorus. This is finely obſerved, and was intended to convey an oblique cenſure on the practice of thoſe poets, who ſtuff out every part of the drama alike with moral ſentences, not conſidering, that the only proper receptacle of them is the chorus, where indeed they have an extreme propriety; it being the peculiar office and character of the chorus to moralize. In the courſe of the action they ſhould rarely be uſed; and that for the plain reaſon aſſigned by the author, juſt quoted, [for the rule holds on the ſtage, as well as at the bar] *Ut rei actores, non vivendi præceptores eſſe videamur.* That there was ſome ground for this reproof of the Roman drama, is collected from the few remaining fragments of the old Latin plays, which have much of this ſententious caſt, and from what Quintilian expreſly tells us of the old Latin poets, whoſe fame, it ſeems, was principally raiſed upon this merit. *Tragœdiæ ſcriptores, Accius & Pacuvius, clariſſimi gravitate ſententiarum, &c.* L. x. c. 1.] To how intolerable an extreme this humour of moralizing in plays was afterwards carried, is well known from Seneca.

But here a queſtion will be ſtarted, "Why then did "the Greeks moralize ſo much, or, if we condemn *Accius* "and *Seneca*, how ſhall we defend *Sophocles* and *Euri*-"*pides?*" An ingenious modern [b] hath taken ſome pains to ſatisfy this difficulty, and in part, I think, hath ſucceeded. His ſolution, in brief, is "That the moral and "political aphoriſms of the Greek ſtage generally con-"tain'd ſome apt and intereſting alluſion to the ſtate of "public affairs, which was eaſily catched by a quick,

[b] P. Brumoy, Diſc. ſur le parall. des Theat. p. 165. Amſt. 1732.

"intelligent

" intelligent auditory; and not a dry, affected moral, " without further meaning, as for the moſt part was that " of the Latins." This account is not a little confirmed by particular inſtances of ſuch acknowledged alluſions, as well as from reflections on the genius and government of the Athenians, at large. But this, though it goes ſome way, does not fully extricate the matter. The truth is, theſe ſentences are too thick ſown in the Greek writers, to be fully accounted for from the ſingle conſideration of their democratical views. Not to obſerve, that the very choice of this *medium* for the conveyance of their political applications, pre-ſuppoſes the prior acknowledged uſe and authority of it. I would then account for it in the following manner.

I. In the virtuous ſimplicity of leſs poliſhed times, this ſpirit of moralizing univerſally is very prevalent; the good ſenſe of ſuch people always delighting to ſhew itſelf in ſententious or proverbial γνῶμαι, or obſervations. Their character, like that of the clown in Shakeſpear, is *to be very ſwift and ſententious.* [As you like it, Act v. ſc. 1.] This is obvious to common experience, and was long ſince obſerved by the *philoſopher*, οἱ ἄγροικοι μάλιϛα γνωμοτύποι εἰσὶ, καὶ ῥᾳδίως ἀποφαίνονται, [Ariſt. Rhet. l. ii. c. 21.] an obſervation, which of itſelf accounts for the practice of the elder poets in Greece, as in all other nations. A cuſtom, thus introduced, is not eaſily laid aſide, eſpecially when the oracular caſt of theſe ſentences, ſo fitted to *ſtrike*, and the moral views of writers themſelves, (which was more particularly true of the old dramatiſts) concurred to favour this taſte. But 2. there was added to this, more eſpecially in the age of Sophocles and Euripides, a general prevailing fondneſs for moral wiſdom, which ſeems to have made the faſhionable ſtudy of men of all ranks in thoſe days; when ſchools of philoſophy were reſorted to for recreation as well as inſtruction, and a knowledge in morals was the ſupreme accompliſhment in vogue: The fruit of theſe philoſophical conferences would naturally ſhew itſelf in certain brief, ſententious concluſions, which would neither contradict the faſhion

ſhion, nor, it ſeems, offend againſt the eaſe and gaiety of converſation in thoſe times. *Schools* and *pedantry*, *morals* and *auſterity*, were not ſo eſſentially connected, in their combinations of ideas, as they have been ſince; and a ſenſible moral truth might have fallen from any mouth, without diſgracing it. Nay, which is very remarkable, the very *ſcholia*, as they were called, or drinking catches of the Greeks, were ſeaſoned with this moral turn; the ſallies of pleaſantry, which eſcaped them in their freeſt hours, being tempered for the moſt part, by ſome ſtrokes of this national ſobriety. "During the courſe of their "entertainments, ſays Athenæus, [L. xv. c. 14.] they "loved to hear from ſome wiſe and prudent perſon, an "agreeable ſong: and thoſe ſongs were held by them "moſt agreeable, which contained exhortations to vir-"tue, or other inſtructions relative to their conduct in "life." And this moralizing humour, ſo prevalent in thoſe times, is, I dare be confident, the true ſource of the ſententious caſt of the Greek dramatic writers, as well as of that ſober air of moral, which, to the no ſmall diſplacency of modern readers, is ſpread over all their poets. Not but there would be ſome difference in thoſe poets themſelves, and in proportion, as they had been more or leſs converſant in the Academy, would be their reliſh of this moral mode; as is clearly ſeen in the caſe of Euripides, that philoſopher of the ſtage, as the Athenians called him, and, who is characterized by Quinctilian, as *ſententiis denſus, & in iis, quæ a ſapientibus tradita ſunt, pæne ipſis par.* [L. x. c. 1.] Yet ſtill the faſhion was ſo general, that no commerce of the world could avoid, or wholly get clear of it; and therefore Sophocles, though his engagements in the ſtate kept him at a greater diſtance from the ſchools, had yet his ſhare of this philoſophical humour. Now this apology for the practice of the Greek poets doth by no means extend to the Roman; Philoſophy having been very late [c], and never generally the

[c] Cicero ſays, *Philoſophia quidem tantum abeſt ut proinde ac de hominum eſt vitâ merita laudetur, ut a pleriſque neglecta, a multis etiam vituperetur.* In another place he tells us, that in his time Ariſtotle was not much known, or read even by the philoſophers themſelves. [*Cic. Top. ſub. init.*]

taſte

taſte of Rome. And, though in the age of Seneca, *Sentences*, we know, were much in uſe; yet the caſt and turn of them evidently ſhew them to have been the affectation of the lettered *few*, and not the *general* mode and practice of the time. For the quaintneſs, in which Seneca's aphoriſms are dreſſed, manifeſtly ſpeaks the labour and artifice of the cloſet, and is juſt the reverſe of that eaſy, ſimple expreſſion, which cloaths them in the Greek poets, thus demonſtrating their familiar currency in common life. Under any other circumſtances than theſe, the practice, as was obſerved, muſt be unqueſtionably faulty; except only in the chorus, where, for the reaſon before given, it may always, with good advantage, be employed.

220. CARMINE QUI TRAGICO, &c.] The connection with ℣ 201, from whence the poet had digreſſed, is worth obſerving. The digreſſion had been taken up in deſcribing the improved ſtate of dramatic muſic; the application of which to the caſe of tragedy, brings him round again to his ſubject, the tragic chorus; to which alone, as hath been obſerved, the two laſt lines refer. This too is the fineſt preparation of what follows. For to have paſſed on directly from the *tibia* to the *ſatyrs*, had been abrupt and inartificial; but from *tragedy*, the tranſition is eaſy, the *ſatyrs* being a ſpecies of the tragic drama.

221. MOX ETIAM, &c.] It is not the intention of theſe notes to retail the accounts of others. I muſt therefore refer the reader, for whatever concerns the hiſtory of the ſatyric, as I have hitherto done, of the tragic, and comic drama, to the numerous diſſertators on the antient ſtage; and above all, in the caſe before us, to the learned Caſaubon; from whom all that hath been ſaid to any purpoſe, by modern writers, hath been taken. Only it will be proper to obſerve one or two particulars, which have been greatly miſunderſtood, and without which it will be impoſſible, in any tolerable manner, to explain what follows.

I. The deſign of the poet, in theſe lines, is to fix the origin of the ſatyric piece, in aſcribing the invention of it to Theſpis. This hath been concluded, without the leaſt warrant from his own words, which barely tell us, "that "the repreſentation of tragedy was, in elder Greece, fol-"lowed by the *ſatyrs*"; and indeed the nature of the thing, as well as the teſtimony of all antiquity, ſhew it to be impoſſible. For the *ſatyr* here ſpoken of, is, in all reſpects, a regular drama, and therefore could not be of earlier date, than the times of Æſchylus, when the conſtitution of the drama was firſt formed. 'Tis true indeed, there was a kind of entertainment, of much greater antiquity, which by the antients is ſometimes called *ſatyric*, out of which (as Ariſtotle aſſures us) tragedy itſelf aroſe. ἡ δὲ τραγῳδία, διὰ τὸ ἐκ σατυρικῆς μεταβαλεῖν, ὀψὲ ἀπεσεμνώθη, [περ. ποιητ. κ. δ.] But then this was nothing but a chorus of ſatyrs [Athenæus, l. xiv.] celebrating the feſtivals of *Bacchus*, with rude ſongs, and uncouth dances; and had little reſemblance to that, which was afterwards called *ſatyric*; which, except that it retained the chorus of ſatyrs, and turned upon ſome ſubject, relative to Bacchus, was of a quite different ſtructure, and, in every reſpect, as regular a compoſition, as tragedy itſelf.

II. Nothing can be plainer from this whole critique of Horace, than that ſatyric pieces, in the true Greek ſenſe, were actually in uſe on the Roman ſtage. The only queſtion is, whether they were the ſame as the Atellanes, or a diſtinct entertainment by themſelves. If the authority of Diomedes be any thing, the latter muſt be the truth, for he expreſsly aſſerts, "that the Satyric and Atellane pieces, "though ſimilar in the general caſt of their compoſition, "differed in this eſſential point, that the perſons in the "former were ſatyrs, in the other, not." [L. iii. c. De poem. gen.] According to the way, in which Voſſius reads his words, the characters in the Atellane, were Tuſcan, *perſonæ Oſcæ*, which is very probable, not ſo much for the reaſons aſſign'd by this Critic (for they are indeed very frivolous) but becauſe, as it ſhould ſeem from a paſ-

ſage

ſage in Strabo, [Lib. v. 233.] the Tuſcan language was uſed in theſe Atellanes, and therefore common ſenſe would require, that the perſons alſo introduced ſhould be Tuſcan. In order to reconcile the Grammarian to the poet, it muſt be then ſaid (what indeed ſeems highly probable) that, when now the Romans, were become acquainted with the Greek models, and had applied themſelves to the imitation of them, theſe Tuſcan characters were exchanged for the Greek ſatyrs, which they before reſembled in the main parts of their character; and which appear, on other occaſions, to have been no ſtrangers at Rome; as we collect from the Sileni and Satyrs, making a part (as Dionyſius relates it) in their triumphal proceſſions. What might probably lead to this change, and facilitate the reception of it with the better ſort, was, the very obſcene, farcical caſt of the old Atellane, which was its true character, even after *it had been tempered by*, what Valerius calls, *the Italic ſeverity* [Val. Max. L xi. c. 4] eſpecially as interſpers'd with thoſe licentious interludes, call'd *Exodia*, which, according to Livy, generally went with it. Indeed from the abſolute ſilence of all ſucceeding writers about the ſatyrs, as poſſeſſing a place on the Roman ſtage, it ſhould ſeem, as if this attempt did not fully ſucceed, and that the old Atellane finally kept its ground. But that they had actually ſome footing on the ſtage, in the Auguſtan reign, beſides this expreſs teſtimony of Horace, is further certainly to be gathered from a curious paſſage in Ovid, which hath never been ſufficiently explained. In excuſe of the looſeneſs of his own poetry, after having alledged the amorous caſt of the ſevereſt ſpecies of it, the Latin tragedy, he goes on thus,

Eſt et in obſcœnos deflexa tragœdia riſus,
Multaque prætexti verba pudoris habet.

Triſt. L. ii. ℣ 409.

The tragedy, here referred to, cannot be the regular Roman tragedy, for that he had diſtinctly conſidered before, and, beſides, it in no age admitted, much leſs in this, of which we are ſpeaking, ſo abſurd and intolerable a mixture. As little can it be underſtood of the Atellane fa-

ble, for that was ever regarded as a ſpecies, not of tragedy, but comedy: The authority of Donatus is very expreſs; "Comœdiarum formæ ſunt tres: Palliatæ, To-"gatæ, *Atellanæ*, ſalibus et jocis compoſitæ, quæ in ſe "non habent niſi vetuſtam elegantiam" [Prol. in Ter.] And Athenæus [L. vi.] ſpeaking of ſome pieces of this ſort, which L. Sylla had compoſed, calls them σατυρικὰς κωμῳδίας, fatyric comedies; *comedies*, becauſe, as Donatus ſays, "ſalibus et jocis compoſitæ:" and *ſatyric*, not that fatyrs were introduced in them, but, according to Diomedes, from their being "argumentis dictiſque ſi-"miles fatyricis fabulis Græcis." Of what then can Ovid be underſtood to ſpeak, but the true ſatyric piece, which was always eſteemed, and, as appears from the Cyclops, in fact is, what Demetrius elegantly calls it, [περὶ ἑρμηνείας] τραγῳδία παιζέση, a lighter kind of *tragedy*; the very name, which Horace, as well as Ovid in this place, gives it? But this is further clear from the inſtance quoted by Ovid, of this looſe tragedy; for he proceeds:

Nec nocet autori, mollem qui fecit Achillem,
Infregiſſe ſuis fortia facta modis.

which well agrees to the idea of a ſatyric piece, and, as Voſius obſerves, ſeems to be the very ſame ſubject, which Athenæus and others tell us, Sophocles had work'd into a ſatyric tragedy, under the title of Ἀχιλλέως ἐρασταί. Hitherto I have chiefly aim'd to confirm, what ſome good critics have been before me in obſerving, that this place in Ovid certainly refers to the ſatyric drama. But I had a further reaſon, as I hinted, for producing it. For it clearly proves, though it hath not, that I know of, been attended to by any writer, that this ſpecies of tragedy, of which Ovid complains, as having been debauched, in violence to its nature, by an obſcene pleaſantry, was a perfectly new thing at Rome. This I collect from the word *deflexa*, which, in its genuine ſenſe, means "the devia-"tion of any thing from its uſual courſe," and therefore as here ſpoken of tragedy, neceſſarily implies, that this

poem

poem had taken an unuſual, that is a *new* rout, in admitting thoſe lewd jeſts, *obſcœnos riſus*, ſo incongruous to its accuſtomed form and character.

I ſuppoſe it plain then from hence, not only that the ſatyric tragedy was in uſe, at this time, in Rome, but, what is more, was an entertainment, newly introduced, in order, as may ſeem, to ſucceed to, or fill the place of the Atellane; which, in its old form, the improved delicacy of this age could but ill bear. Taking it in this view, every thing the Poet ſays on the ſubject of the ſatyrs, will not only be intelligible, and conſiſtent with the accounts of thoſe times, but have a propriety and addreſs, which will fully juſtify it from all exceptions, and greatly confirm the general doctrine of theſe notes, "that "the main, or rather ſole purpoſe of the epiſtle was to "reform and perfect the Roman ſtage." III. For the abſolute merit of theſe ſatyrs, the reader will judge of it himſelf by comparing the Cyclops, the only piece of this kind remaining to us from antiquity, with the rules here delivered by Horace. Only it may be obſerved, in addition to what the reader will find elſewhere [*n.* ℣ 224.] apologized in its favour, that the double character of the ſatyrs admirably fitted it, as well for a ſenſible entertainment to the wiſe, as for the ſport and diverſion of the vulgar. For while the groteſque appearance, and jeſting vein of theſe fantaſtic perſonages amuſed the one; the other ſaw much farther; and conſidered them, at the ſame time, as replete with ſcience, and informed by a ſpirit of the moſt abſtruſe and profound wiſdom. Hence important leſſons of civil prudence, intereſting alluſions to public affairs, or a high, refined moral, might, with the higheſt probability, be inſinuated, under the ſlight cover of a ruſtic ſimplicity. And from this inſtructive caſt, which, from its nature, muſt be very obſcure, if not impenetrable, to us at this day, was, I doubt not, derived the principal pleaſure which the antients found in this ſpecies of the drama. If the modern reader would conceive any thing of the nature and degree of this pleaſure, he may, in part, gueſs at it, from reflecting on the entertainment he himſelf receives from the characters of the

in Shakeſpeare: *who*, as the poet himſelf hath characterized them, *uſe their folly, like a ſtalking horſe, and under the preſentation of that, ſhoot their wit* [As you like it.]

221. AGRESTES SATYROS, &c.] It hath been ſhewn, that the poet could not intend, in theſe lines, to *fix the origin of the ſatyric drama*. But, though this be certain, and the diſpute concerning that point be thereby determined, yet is it to be noted, that he purpoſely deſcribes the ſatyr in its ruder and leſs poliſhed form; glancing even at ſome barbarities, which deformed the Bacchic chorus; which was, properly, the ſatyric piece, before Æſchylus had, by his regular conſtitution of the drama, introduced it, under a very different form on the ſtage. The reaſon of this conduct is given in *n.* on ℣ 203. Hence the propriety of the word *nudavit*; which Lambin rightly interprets, *Nudos introduxit Satyros*, the poet hereby expreſſing the monſtrous indecorum of this entertainment in its firſt unimproved ſtate. Alluding alſo to this ancient character of the *Satyr*, he calls him *aſper*, i. e. rude and petulant; and even adds, that his jeſts were intemperate, und without the *leaſt mixture of gravity*. For thus, upon the authority of a very learned critic, I explane *incolumi gravitate*, i. e. rejecting every thing ſerious, bidding *farewell*, as we ſay, *to all gravity*. Thus [L. iii. O. 5.]

Incolumi Jove & urbe Roma:

i. e. bidding farewell to Jupiter [Capitolinus] and Rome; agreeably to what is ſaid juſt before,

Ancilium & nominis & togæ
OBLITUS, *æternæque Veſtæ.*

Farewell all gravity, is as remote from the original ſenſe of the words *fare well*, as *incolumi gravitate* from that of *incolumis*.

224. POTUS ET EXLEX.] The lines

Indoctus quid enim ſaperet liberque laborum
Ruſticus urbano confuſus, turpis honeſto?

were, I obſerved, certainly miſplaced. They ſhould, I think

think, come in here, where their ſenſe is extremely pertinent. The poet had been ſpeaking of the ſatyric drama, which, ſays he, was added to the tragic,

eo quod
Inlecebris erat, & grata novitate morandus
Spectator, functuſque ſacris, & potus, et exlex.

But why, it might be aſked, this compliance, in ſo falſe a taſte, with a drunken, lawleſs rabble? The anſwer is natural, and to this purpoſe. "Becauſe their theatres neceſſarily conſiſted of a mixed aſſembly, every part of which was to be conſidered in the public diverſions." The queſtion then hath an extreme propriety:

Indoctus quid enim ſaperet liberque laborum,
Ruſticus urbano confuſus, turpis honeſto?

The *ruſticus* and *turpis* demanded the ſatyric piece. It was the neceſſary reſult of this mixture; as to gratify the better ſort, the *urbanus* and *honeſtus*, the tragic drama was exhibited. It is ſome prejudice in favour of this conjecture, that it explanes to us, what would otherwiſe appear very ſtrange, that ſuch groſs ribaldry, as we know the Atellanes conſiſted of, could ever be endured by the politeſt age of Rome. But ſcenical repreſentations being then intended, not, as in our days, for the entertainment of the better ſort, but, on certain great ſolemnities, indifferently for the diverſion of the whole city, it became neceſſary to conſult the taſte of the multitude, as well as of thoſe, *quibus eſt equus et pater et res*[a].

And this may ſerve to vindicate the poet from the cen-

a If any one, after all, ſhould think the tranſpoſition here contended for, too violent, the only tolerable interpretation of the two verſes, as they now ſtand, is, perhaps, the following. It is poſſible, the progreſs of the poet's thoughts may have been this: 1. Simplicity and ruſticity. 2. Ruſticity and licentiouſneſs, *i. e.* ſuch an alteration, as would naturally ariſe from ſome corruption of manners, and a great increaſe of people; but without the addition of any conſiderable degree of art, or refinement. 3. In proceſs of time, this ſame licentious muſic, refined and adorned with all the graces of art. N. B. The muſic, in its ſecond ſtage, though ſtill ruſtic, and in bad taſte, muſt yet be ſuppoſed to have been *approaching* ſomewhat towards perfection. *Sic priſcæ*, &c. i. e. And thus, by degrees, from one improvement to another, the *Tibicen* at laſt attained that delicacy of muſic, and thoſe additional graces of motion and dreſs, which we ſee in the preſent age. *Sic*, i. e. till at length.

ſure of a late critic[b], who has fallen upon this part of the epiſtle with no mercy. "The poet, ſays he, ſpends a great "number of verſes about theſe ſatyrs; but the ſubject it-"ſelf is unworthy his pen. He, who could not bear the "elegant mimes of Laberius, that he ſhould think this "farcical and obſcene traſh, worth his peculiar notice, is "ſomewhat ſtrange." I doubt not, it appeared ſo to this writer, who neither conſidered the peculiar neceſſity of the ſatyric piece, nor ſaw any thing of the poet's purpoſe and drift in this epiſtle. The former is the more extraordinary, becauſe he hath told us, and rightly too, "that "to content the people, the ſatyric was ſuperadded to the "tragic drama." And he quotes a paſſage from Diomedes, which gives the ſame account, *Satyros induxerunt ludendi cauſa jocandique, ſimul ut ſpectator inter res tragicas ſeriaſque ſatyrorum quoque jocis & ludis delectaretur.* Should not this have taught him, that what was ſo requiſite to content the people, might deſerve ſome notice from the poet? This *farcical traſh* was chiefly calculated for thoſe, who, without the *enticement of ſo agreeable a change* in the entertainment of the day, would not have had patience to ſit out the tragedy; which being intended for the gratification of the better ſort, *urbani & honeſti*, they, in their turn, required to be diverted in the only way, which was to the level of their taſte, that of farce and pleaſantry. And this, I dare be confident, ſo great a patron of liberty, as this writer, will agree with me in thinking to be but reaſonable in a free ſtate; which ought to make ſome proviſion for the *few*, that may chance, even under ſuch advantages, to want a truly critical ſpirit. I hold then, that Horace acted, not only in the character of a good critic, but of a prudent man, and good citizen, in attempting to refine, what it had not been equitable, or was not in his power, wholly to remove. But 2. the learned critic as little attended to the drift of the epiſtle, as to the important uſe and neceſſity of the ſatyric drama. He muſt otherwiſe have ſeen, that, in an eſſay to improve and regulate the Roman theatre (which is the ſole purpoſe of it) the poet's buſineſs was to take it, as it

[b] *Obſervat. on Shakeſpeare*, p. 112.

then

then ſtood, and to confine himſelf to ſuch defects and abuſes, as he found moſt likely to admit a correction, and not, as viſionary projectors uſe, to propoſe a thorough reform of the public taſte in every inſtance. The *Atellanes* had actual poſſeſſion of the ſtage, and from their antiquity, and other prejudices in their favour, as well as from the very deſign and end of their theatrical entertainments, would be ſure to keep it. What had the poet then, in theſe circumſtances, to do, but, in purſuance of his main deſign, to reform, or rather [ſee *n.* on ℣ 221.] to encourage an alteration in the kind of, that entertainment, which he was not at liberty abſolutely, and under every ſhape, to reject, that ſo, though he could not hope to inſpire a right taſte into the people, he might render their diverſions at leaſt tolerable to better judgments. And this might eaſily have been effected in following the directions here given; part of which were intended to free them from that *obſcene and farcical traſh*, which appears to have been no leſs offenſive to the poet, than to this critic.

As for the ſo much applauded *mimes*, they had not, it is probable, at this time gained a footing on the ſtage, ſufficient to entitle them to ſo much conſideration. This was a new upſtart ſpecies of the drama, which, though it had the common good-fortune of abſurd novelties, to take with the great; yet was generally diſapproved by men of better taſte, and better morals. Cicero hath paſſed a ſevere cenſure upon it in one of his epiſtles, [Ad famil. ix. 16.] which intimates, that it was of a more buffoon and ridiculous compoſition, than their Atellanes; whoſe place it began to be the faſhion to ſupply with this ribaldry. Horace, with this writer's leave, might therefore judge it better to retain the Atellanes under ſome reſtrictions, than adopt what was much worſe. But the mimes of Laberius were quite another thing. They were all elegance. So J. Scaliger [Comment. de Comœd. and Tragœd. c. vi.] and, after him, this writer, tells us; but on no better grounds, than that he wrote good Latin (though not always that, as may be ſeen in A. Gellius, L. 16. c. 7.) and hath left a few elegant, moral ſcraps behind him. But what then? the kind of com-

compoſition was ridiculous and abſurd, and, in every view, far leſs tolerable, than the *ſatyrs* under the regulation of Horace. The latter was a regular drama, conſiſting of an intire fable, conducted according to the rules of probability and good ſenſe, only daſhed with an extravagance of mirth and pleaſantry for the ſake of the mob. The character of the former we learn from Diomedes, [iii. p. 488. ed. Putſch.] who defines it to be *an irreverent and laſcivious imitation of obſcene acts — mimus eſt ſermonis cujuſlibet motus ſine reverentia, vel factorum & turpium cum laſcivia imitatio.* And Scaliger himſelf owns *veri mimi proprium eſſe quædam ſordida ut affectet*, loc. cit. It ſeems to have been a confuſed medley of comic drollery on a variety of ſubjects, without any conſiſtent order or deſign; delivered by one actor, and heightened with all the licence of obſcene geſticulation. Its beſt character, as practiſed by its greateſt maſter, Laberius, was that of being witty in a very bad way [Sen. Controv. l. iii. c. 18.] and its ſole end and boaſt, *riſu diducere rictum* [Hor. 1. § 107.] which, whatever virtue it may be, is not always a proof of much elegance. But I have ſpent too many words on a criticiſm, which the ingenious author, I am perſuaded, let fall unawares, and did not mean to give us as the reſult of a mature and well-weighed deliberation on this ſubject.

225. VERUM ITA RISORES &c.] The connecting particle, *verum*, expreſſes the oppoſition intended between the original ſatyr and that which the poet approves. For having inſinuated the propriety of the ſatyric ſhews, as well from the practice of Greece, as the nature of feſtival ſolemnities, the poet goes on to animadvert on ſuch defects, and to preſcribe ſuch rules, in the conduct of them, as might render them a tolerable diverſion, even to the better ſort. This introduction of the ſubject hath no ſmall art. For, there being at this time (as hath been ſhewn) an attempt to bring in the Greek ſatyrs, while the Atellane plays (as was likely) ſtill held the affections of the people, the poet was not openly to reproach and diſcredit theſe; but, by a tacit preference, to ſupport and juſtify

juſtify the other. This is done with addreſs. For, inſtead of criticiſing the Atellanes, which came directly in his way, after having cloſed his account of the Roman tragedy, he relates, as it were, incidentally the practice of antient Greece exhibiting ſatyrs, and thence immediately paſſes on, without ſo much as touching on the other favourite entertainment, to offer ſome directions concerning the ſatyric drama.

227. NE QUICUNQUE DEUS, QUICUNQUE ADHIBEBITUR HEROS &c.] One point in which the ſatyrs ſeem to have differed from the Atellane comedy, was *the dignity of the perſons*; Gods and Heroes being introduced therein, and often the very ſame Gods and Heroes, which had borne a part in the preceding tragedy: a practice, which Horace, I ſuppoſe, intended, by this hint, to recommend as moſt regular. This gave the ſerious, tragic air to the ſatyr. The comic, aroſe from the *riſor* and *dicax*, who was either a ſatyr himſelf, or ſome character of an extravagant, ridiculous caſt, like a ſatyr. Of this kind, ſays Diomedes, from whom I take this account, are Antolychus and Burris: which laſt particular I mention for the ſake of juſtifying a correction of the learned Caſaubon. This great critic conjectured, that, inſtead of *Burris*, in this place, it ſhould be read *Buſiris*. His reaſon is "*nam Burris iſte ex Græcorum poetis mihi non eſt notus:*" which reaſon hath more force, than appears at firſt ſight. For the very nature of this diverſion required, that the principal character of it ſhould be well known, which it was ſcarce likely to be, if not taken from a common ſtory in their poets. But Voſſius objects "*ſed non ea fuerit perſona ridicula:*" contrary to what the grammarian repreſents it. But how ſo? Buſiris was a ſavage, inhoſpitable tyrant, who ſacrificed ſtrangers. And what ſhould hinder this character from being made ridiculous, as well as Polypheme in the Cyclops? Their characters were not unlike. And, as is ſeen in that cute, the antients knew to ſet forth ſuch monſters of cruelty in a light, that rendered them equally abſurd and deteſtable. This was agreeable to their humanity, who, by ſuch

ſuch repreſentations, loved to cultivate a ſpirit of benevolence in the ſpectators; and ſhews the moral tendency of even the abſurdeſt of the antient dramatic ſhews. The objection of Voſſius is then of no weight. But what further confirms the emendation of the excellent Caſaubon, is a manuſcript note on the margin of a printed copy of this book, which I have now by me, as it ſhould ſeem, from his own hand, "*lectionem vero quam reſtituimus etiam in optimo codice Puteano poſtea invenimus.*" The learned reader will therefore, henceforth, look upon the text of *Diomedes*, in this place, as fully ſettled.

229. MIGRET IN OBSCURAS &c.
AUT, DUM VITAT &c.

The two faults, cautioned againſt, are 1. a too low, or vulgar expreſſion, in the comic parts; and 2. a too ſublime one, in the tragic. The *former* of theſe faults would almoſt naturally adhere to the firſt eſſays of the Roman ſatyrs, from the buffoon genius of the old Atellane: and the *latter*, from not apprehending the true meaſure and degree of the tragic mixture. To correct both theſe, the poet gives the exacteſt idea of the ſatyrs, in the image of a Roman matron, ſharing in the mirth of a religious feſtival. The occaſion obliged to ſome freedoms; and yet the dignity of her character demanded a decent reſerve.

234. NON EGO INORNATA &c.] The ſcope of theſe lines may be to regulate the ſatyric ſtyle, by the idea of its character, before given, in the alluſion to a Roman matron. Conformably to that idea, a plain, unornamented expreſſion [from ℣ 234 to 236] muſt not always be uſed. The three following lines inforce this general application by example.

If the exact reader finds himſelf diſſatisfied with this gloſs, which ſeems the only one, the words, as they now ſtand, will bear, he may, perhaps, incline to admit the following conjecture, which propoſes to read, inſtead of *inornata*, *honorata*. I. The context, I think, requires this change. For the two faults obſerved above [℣ 229, 30.] were,

were, 1. a too low expreſſion, and, 2. a too lofty. Correſponding to this double charge, the poet having fixed the idea of this ſpecies of compoſition [℣ 231, 2, 3.] ſhould naturally be led to apply it to both points in queſtion: 1. to the comic part, in preſcribing the true meaſure of its condeſcenſion, and, 2. to the tragic, in ſettling the true bounds of its elevation. And this, according to the reading here offered, the poet doth, only in an inverted order. The ſenſe of the whole would be this,

1. *Non ego* HONORATA *& dominantia nomina ſolum*
Verbaque, Piſones, ſatyrorum ſcriptor amabo:

i. e. in the tragic ſcenes, I would not confine myſelf to ſuch words only, as are in honour and bear rule in tragic, and the moſt ſerious ſubjects; this ſtatelineſs not agreeing to the condeſcending levity of the ſatyr.

2. *Nec ſic enitar tragico differre colori,*
Ut nihil interſit Davuſne loquatur, & audax
Pythias, emuncto lucrata Simone talentum,
An cuſtos famuluſque Dei Silenus alumni.

i. e. nor, on the contrary, in the comic ſcenes, would I incur the other extreme of a too plain, and vulgar expreſſion, this as little ſuiting its inherent matron-like dignity. But, II. this correction improves the *expreſſion* as well as the *ſenſe*. For beſides the oppoſition, implied in the disjunctive, *nec*, which is this way reſtored, *dominantia* hath now its genuine ſenſe, and not that ſtrange and foreign one forced upon it out of the Greek language. As connected with *honorata*, it becomes a metaphor, elegantly purſued; and hath too a ſingular propriety, the poet here ſpeaking of figurative terms. And then, for *honorata* itſelf, it ſeems to have been a familiar mode of expreſſion with Horace. Thus [2. Ep. ii. 112.] *honore indigna vocabula* are ſuch words as have *parum ſplendoris* and are *ſine pondere*. And "*quæ ſunt in honore vocabula*" is ſpoken of the contrary ones, ſuch as are fit to enter into a ſerious tragic compoſition, in this very epiſtle, ℣ 71.

240. EX NOTO FICTUM &c.] This precept [from ℣ 240 to 244] is analogous to that, before given [℣ 129.] con-

concerning tragedy. It directs to form the ſatyrs out of a known ſubject. The reaſons are, in general, the ſame for both. Only one ſeems peculiar to the ſatyrs. For the caſt of them being neceſſarily romantic, and the perſons, thoſe fantaſtic beings, called ſatyrs, the τὸ ὅμοιον, or probable, will require the ſubject to have gained a popular belief, without which the repreſentation muſt appear unnatural. Now theſe ſubjects, which have gained a popular belief, in conſequence of old tradition, and their frequent celebration in the poets, are what Horace calls *nota*; juſt as newly invented ſubjects; or, which comes to the ſame thing, ſuch as had not been employed by other writers, *indicta*, he, on a like occaſion, terms *ignota*. The connection lies thus. Having mentioned *Silenus* in ỳ 239, one of the commoneſt characters in this drama, an objection immediately offers itſelf; "but what good "poet will ingage in ſubjects and characters ſo trite and "hackney'd?" The anſwer is, *ex noto fictum carmen ſequar*, i. e. however trite and well known this and ſome other characters, eſſential to the ſatyr, are, and muſt be; yet will there be ſtill room for fiction and genius to ſhew itſelf. The conduct and diſpoſition of the play may be wholly new, and above the ability of common writers, *tantum ſeries juncturaque pollet*.

244. SYLVIS DEDUCTI CAVEANT &c.] Having before [ỳ 232.] ſettled the true idea of the ſatyric ſtyle in general, he now treats of the peculiar language of the ſatyrs themſelves. This common ſenſe demands to be in conformity with their ſylvan character, neither affectedly tender and gallant, on the one hand; nor groſsly, and offenſively obſcene, on the other. The *firſt* of theſe cautions ſeems levelled at a falſe improvement, which, on the introduction of the Roman ſatyr, was probably attempted on the ſimple, rude plan of the Greek, without conſidering the ruſtic extraction and manners of the fauns and ſatyrs. The *latter*, obliquely glances at the impurities of the Atellane, whoſe licentious ribaldry, as hath been obſerved, would, of courſe, infect the firſt eſſays of the Roman ſatyr.

251.

251. SYLLABA LONGA BREVI, &c.] This whole critique on the ſatyrs concludes with ſome directions about the Iambic verſe. When the commentary aſſerts, that this metre was common to tragedy and the ſatyrs, this is not to be taken ſtrictly; the ſatyrs, in this reſpect, as in every other, ſuſtaining a ſort of intermediate character betwixt tragedy and comedy. For, accurately ſpeaking, their proper meaſure, as the Grammarians teach, was the Iambic, enlivened with the trybrachys. "*Gaudent* [Victor. L. ii. c. met. Iamb.] *triſyllabo pede & maxime tribrache.*" Yet there was likeneſs enough to conſider this whole affair of the metre under the ſame head. The Roman dramatic writers were very careleſs in their verſification, which aroſe, as is hinted, ℣ 259, from an immoderate and undiſtinguiſhing veneration of their old poets.

264. ET DATA ROMANIS VENIA EST INDIGNA POETIS.] It appears certainly, that what is ſaid here concerning the metre of dramatic poems, was peculiarly calculated for the correction of the Roman negligence, and inaccuracy in this reſpect. This, if it had not been ſo expreſsly told us, would have been ſeen from the few remaining fragments of the old Latin plays, in which a remarkable careleſsneſs of numbers is obſerved. This gives a preſumption, that, with the like advantage of conſulting them, it would alſo appear, that the reſt of the poet's rules were directed to the ſame end, and that even ſuch, as are delivered in the moſt abſolute and general form, had a peculiar reference, agreeably to what is here taught of the plan of this poem, to the correſponding defects in the ſtate of the Roman ſtage.

270. AT VESTRI PROAVI PLAUTINOS ET NUMEROS ET LAUDAVERE SALES; NIMIUM PATIENTER UTRUMQUE, NE DICAM, STULTE MIRATI;] It hath been thought ſtrange, that Horace ſhould paſs ſo ſevere a cenſure on the *wit* of Plautus, which yet appeared to Cicero ſo admirable, that he ſpeaks of it as *elegans, urbanum, ingenioſum, facetum.* [De Off. i. 29.] Nor can it be ſaid, that this difference of judgment was owing

owing to the improved delicacy of taſte for wit, in the Auguſtan age, ſince it doth not appear, that Horace's own jokes, when he attempts to divert us in this way, are at all better than Cicero's.

The common anſwer, ſo far as it reſpects the poet, is, I believe, the true one: "that, endeavouring to beat "down the exceſſive veneration of the elder Roman po-"ets, and amongſt the reſt, (as appears from 2 Ep. i. "and A. P. 54.) of Plautus, he cenſures, without reſerve, "every the leaſt defect in his writings; though, in ge-"neral, he agreed with Cicero in admiring him." But then this was all. For that he was not ſo over-nice as to diſlike Plautus' wit in the main, and, but in this view, probably had not criticized him at all, I collect from his expreſs approbation of the wit of the *old comedy*; which certainly was not more delicate, than that of *Plautus*.

ridiculum acri
Fortius & melius magnas plerumque ſecat res.
Illi, ſcripta quibus comœdia priſca viris eſt,
Hoc ſtabant, HOC SUNT IMITANDI. 1 S. x. 15.

I know, it hath been thought, that, even in this very place, where he cenſures the wit of Plautus, he directs us *ad Græca exemplaria*, i. e. as his critics underſtand him, to Ariſtophanes, and the other writers of the old comedy; but ſuch a direction in this place, were altogether improper, and the ſuppoſition is, beſides, a palpable miſtake. For the *Græca exemplaria* are referred to *only*, as models in exact verſification, as the tenor of the place fully ſhews. And what Horace afterwards remarks on the wit of Plautus, in addition to the obſervations on metre, is a new and diſtinct criticiſm, and hath no kind of reference to the preceding direction. But ſtill, as I ſaid, Horace appears no ſuch enemy to the old comic wit, as, without the particular reaſon aſſigned, to have ſo ſeverely condemned it. The difficulty is to account for Cicero's ſo peculiar admiration of it, and that a taſte, otherwiſe exact, as his, ſhould delight in the coarſe humour of Plautus, and the old comedy. The caſe, I believe, was this:

Cicero,

Cicero had imbib'd a ſtrong reliſh of the frank and libertin wit of the old comedy, as beſt ſuited to the genius of popular eloquence; which, though it demands to be tempered with ſome urbanity, yet never attains its end ſo effectually, as when let down and accommodated, in ſome certain degree, to the general taſt and manners of the people. This Cicero in effect owns, when he tells us, the main end of jeſting at the bar [De Orat. ccxl.] is, not to acquire the credit of conſummate humour, but to carry the cauſe, *ut proficiamus aliquid:* that is, *to make an impreſſion on the people*; which is generally, we know, better done by a coarſer joke, than by the elegance of refined raillery. And that this was the real ground of Cicero's preference of the old comedy to the new, may be concluded, not only from the nature of the thing, and his own example (for he was ever reckoned intemperate in his jeſts, which by no means anſwer to the elegance of his character) but is certainly collected from what Quintilian, in his account of it, expreſsly obſerves of the old comedy, *Neſcio an ulla poeſis (poſt Homerum &) aut ſimilior ſit oratoribus, aut ad oratores faciendos aptior.* The reaſon, doubtleſs, was, that *ſtrength*, and *prompt and eloquent freedom, Vires & facundiſſima libertas*, which he had before obſerved, ſo peculiarly belonged to it.

And this, I think, will go ſome way towards clearing an embaraſſing circumſtance in the hiſtory of the Roman learning, which I know not, if any writer hath yet taken notice of. It is, that though Menander and the authors of the new comedy were afterwards admired, as the only maſters of the comic drama, yet this does not appear to have been ſeen, or, at leaſt, ſo fully acknowledged, by the Roman writers, till after the Auguſtan age; notwithſtanding that the Roman taſt was, from that time, viſibly declining. The reaſon, I doubt not, was, that the popular eloquence, which continued, in a good degree of vigour, to that time, participating more of the freedom of the *old* comic banter, and rejecting, as improper to its end, the refinements of the *new*, inſenſibly depraved the public taſt; which, by degrees only, and not till a

ſtudied and cautious declamation had, by the neceſſary influence of abſolute power, ſucceeded to the liberty of their old oratory, was fully reconciled to the delicacy and ſtrict decorum of Menander's wit. Even the caſe of Terence, which, at firſt ſight, might ſeem to bear hard againſt it, confirms this account. This poet, ſtruck with the ſupreme elegance of Menander's manner, and attempting too ſoon, before the public taſt was ſufficiently formed for it, to bring it on the ſtage, had occaſion for all the credit, his noble patrons could give him, to ſupport himſelf againſt the popular clamor. What was the object of that *clamour*, we learn from a curious paſſage in one of his prologues, where his adverſary is made to object,

Quas—fecit—fabulas
Tenui eſſe oratione & ſcriptura levi. Prol. ad Phorm.

The ſenſe of which is not, as his commentators have idly thought, *that his ſtyle was low and trifling*, for this could never be pretended, but *that his dialogue was inſipid, and his characters, and, in general, his whole compoſition, without that comic heightening, which their vitiated taſtes required.* This further appears from thoſe common verſes of Cæſar, where, characterizing the genius of Terence's plays, as devoid of this comic ſpirit, he calls them *lenia ſcripta:*

LENIBUS *atque utinam* SCRIPTIS *adjuncta foret vis*
COMICA:

words, which are the cleareſt comment on the lines in queſtion.

The truth is, Plautus, who chiefly copied from the *middle* comedy, had, by the drollery of his wit, and the buffoon pleaſantry of his ſcenes, ſo enchanted the people, as to continue the reigning favourite of the ſtage, even long after Afranius and Terence had appeared on it. And when now, through ſome gradual poliſh, Menander's manner became better liked, yet even Cæſar, as we have ſeen, whom, of all the Romans of his time, one would leaſt ſuſpect of any diſlike to Terence, could yet find this to object to him, that he was defective in comic wit. And,

to

to ſee the contagion of authority! modern critics have taken it upon Cæſar's word, and accordingly have made this the main ground of difference, in all their ſee-ſaw parallels between theſe two poets. But the humour, as was ſaid, continued through the Auguſtan age [a], when, as we learn from Horace, in many parts of his writings, the public applauſe ſtill followed Plautus; in whom though himſelf could ſee many faults, yet he does not appear to have gone ſo far, as, upon the whole, to give the preference to Terence. Afterwards indeed the caſe altered. Paterculus admires; and Plutarch and Quintilian are perfectly charmed: *ita omnem vitæ imaginem expreſſit, ita eſt omnibus rebus, perſonis, affectibus accommodatus.* This character, one would think, ſhould have fitted him alſo for a complete model to the orator. And this, as might be expected, was Quintilian's opinion. For, though he ſaw, as appears from the paſſage already quoted, that the writers of the old comedy were in fact, *the likeſt to orators, and the moſt proper to form them to the practice of the Forum*, yet, in admiration of the abſolute perfection of Menander's manner, and criticizing him by the rules of a juſt and accurate rhetoric, and not at all in the views of a practical orator, he pronounces him to be a complete pattern of oratorial excellence: *vel unus, diligenter lectus, ad cuncta efficienda ſufficiat*, L. x c. 1. Yet Cicero, it ſeems, thought otherwiſe; for he does not ſo much as mention Menander in his rhetorical books, though he is very large in commending the authors of the old Greek comedy. The reaſon was unqueſtionably that we have been explaining: The delicate obſervance of decorum, for which this poet was ſo famous, *in omnibus mire cuſtoditur ab hoc poeta decorum*, rendered him an unfit model for a popular ſpeaker, eſpecially in Rome, where an orator was much more likely to carry his point by the *vis comica*, the *broader mirth* of Ariſtophanes, or Plautus, than by the delicate railleries, and exquiſite paintings of Menander, or Terence.

[a] And no wonder, when, as Suetonius tells us, the emperor himſelf was ſo delighted with the old comedy. [85. 5.]

273. SI MODO EGO ET VOS SCIMUS INURBANUM LEPIDO SEPONERE DICTO.] It was very late, e'er the ancients became acquainted with this diſtinction. Indeed it does not appear, they ever poſſeſſed it in that ſupreme degree, which might have been expected from their exquiſite diſcernment in other inſtances. Even Horace himſelf, though his pictures of life are commonly the moſt delicate, and wrought up in the higheſt beauty of humour, yet, when he affects the *plaiſant*, and purpoſely aims at the comic ſtyle and manner, is obſerved to ſink beneath himſelf extremely. The truth is, there is ſomething low, and what the French call *groſſier*, in the whole caſt of antient wit; which is rather a kind of rude and illiberal ſatire, than a juſt and temperate ridicule, reſtrained by the exact rules of civility and good ſenſe. This a celebrated writer, who ſeems willing to think the moſt favourably of the antient wits, in effect owns, when, after quoting certain inſtances of their raillery, he ſays, *Ces exemples, quoique vifs & bons en leur genre, ont quelque choſe de trop dur, qui ne s'accommoderoit pas à nôtre maniere de vivre; & ce ſeroit ce que nous appellons rompre en viſiere, que de dire en face des veritez auſſi fortes que celles-là* [Rec. de bons Contes & de bons Mots, p 89.] This rudeneſs, complained of, appears in nothing more evident, than in their perpetual banter on corporal infirmities, which runs through all the wits both of Greece and Rome. And to ſhew us, that this was not a practice, they allowed themſelves in againſt rule, Cicero mentions corporal infirmities [De Or. L ii. c. 59.] as one of the moſt legitimate ſources of the RIDICULOUS. *Eſt deformitatis & corporis vitiorum ſatis bella materies.* And in another place, *Valde videntur etiam imagines, quæ fere in deformitatem, aut in aliquod vitium corporis ducuntur cum ſimilitudine turpioris, &c.* [ib. c. 66.] And this, which is very remarkable, though they ſaw the abſurdity of it, as appears from the anſwer of Lamia, recorded by Cicero, to a joke of this kind, *Non potui mihi formam ipſe fingere*, [ib. c. 65.] The univerſal prevalence of a practice ſo abſurd in itſelf, and ſeen by themſelves to be ſo, in the two politeſt ſtates of the

the old world, muſt needs have ſprung from ſome very *general*, and *powerful* cauſe; which, becauſe it hath not, that I know of been conſidered by any writer, I ſhall here attempt to open and explain. The ſubject is curious, and would require a volume to do it juſtice. I can only hint at the principal reaſons, which appear to me to have been theſe.

I. *The free, and popular government of thoſe ſtates.* This, preſerving an equality of condition, and thereby ſpreading a fearleſsneſs and independency through all ranks and orders of men, of courſe produced and indulged the utmoſt freedom of expreſſion, uninfluenced by hopes of favour, and unawed by fear of perſonal offence; the two ſources, from whence the civility of a more cautious ridicule is deriv'd. Now of all the ſpecies of raillery, the moſt natural and *obvious* to a people, unreſtrained by theſe cauſes, is ever the *coarſeſt*, ſuch as that on corporal deformities; as appears from its prevailing every where, in all forms of government, amongſt the loweſt of the people, betwixt whom thoſe cauſes never ſubſiſt. But this reaſon involves in it ſome particulars, which deſerve to be conſidered. 1. The *orators*, who catched it from the conſtitution themſelves, contributed in their turn to forward and help on this diſpoſition to uncivilized mirth. For, the form of their government requiring immediate, and almoſt continual, applications to the people; and the nature of ſuch applications giving frequent exerciſe to their wit, it was natural for them to ſuit it to the capacities of their auditory; if indeed they had ſeen better themſelves. Thus we find the orators in the Forum, even in the later times of the Roman republic, expoſing their adverſary to the broad mirth of the populace, by enlarging on his *low ſtature*, *ugly face*, or *diſtorted chin*. Inſtances of which may be met with in Cicero's treatiſe De oratore; and even, as hath been obſerved, in ſome orations and other pieces of Cicero himſelf. 2. From the *Forum* the humour inſenſibly ſpread amongſt all orders, and, above all, amongſt the writers for the ſtage, where it was kept up in its full vigour, or rather heightened to a further extravagance, the laughter of the people being its more immediate and

direct aim. But, the ſtage not only conformed as of courſe it would, to the ſpirit of the times (which, for the reaſon already given, were none of the moſt obſervant of decorum) but, as we ſhall alſo find, it had perhaps the greateſt influence in *producing and forming that ſpirit itſelf*. This will appear, if we recollect, in few words, *the riſe, progreſs, and character of the ancient ſtage*. The Greek drama, we know, had its origin from the looſe, licentious raillery of the rout of Bacchus, indulging to themſelves the freeſt ſallies of taunt and invective, as would beſt ſuit to lawleſs natures, inſpirited by feſtal mirth, and made extravagant by wine. Hence aroſe, and with a character anſwering to this original, the *ſatyric drama*; the ſpirit of which was afterwards, in good meaſure, revived and continued in the old comedy, and itſelf preſerved, though with conſiderable alteration in the form, through all the ſeveral periods of the Greek ſtage; even, when tragedy, which aroſe out of it, was brought to its laſt perfection. Much the ſame may be obſerved of the *Roman* drama, which, we are told, had its riſe in the unreſtrained feſtivity of the ruſtic youth. This gave occaſion to their *Satyræ*, that is, medleys of an irregular form, acted for the diverſion of the people. And, when afterwards Livius Andronicus had, by a further reform, reduced theſe *Satyræ* into regular tragedies, another ſpecies of buffoon ridicule was cultivated, under the name of *Atellanæ fabulæ*; which, according to Diomedes' character of them, *were replete with jocular witticiſms, and very much reſembled the Greek ſatyrs. Dictis jocularibus refertæ, ſimiles fere ſunt ſatyricis fabulis Græcorum.* Theſe were ever after retained, and annexed to their moſt regular dramatic entertainments in Rome, juſt as the *ſatyrs* were in Greece; and this (as was ſeen in its place) though much pains was taken to reform, if not wholly remove, them. But to ſhew how ſtrong the paſſion of the Romans was for this rude, illiberal banter, even the licentious character of the *Atellanes* did not fully ſatisfy them; but, as if they were determined to ſtick to their genuine ruſticity, they continued the *Satyræ* themſelves, under the name of

of *Exodia*, that is, farces of the groſſeſt and moſt abſurd compoſition; which, to heighten the mirth of the day, were commonly interwoven with the Atellane pieces. The reaſon of the continuance of ſuch ribaldry in the politeſt ages of Greece and Rome hath been enquired into. At preſent it appears, what effect it muſt neceſſarily have upon the public taſt.

II. Another cauſe, connected with the foregoing, and riſing out of it, ſeems to have been the feſtal licence of particular ſeaſons, ſuch as the *Dionyſia*, and *Panathenæa*, amongſt the Greeks; and the *Bacchanalia* and *Saturnalia*, at Rome. Theſe latter, it is obſervable, were continued to the lateſt period of the Roman empire, preſerving in them an image, as well of the frank and libertine wit of their old ſtage, as of the original equality and independency of their old times. Quintilian thinks, that, with ſome regulation, good uſe might have been made of theſe ſeaſons of licence, for the cultivating a juſt ſpirit of raillery in the orators of his time. As it was, there is no doubt, they helped much to vitiate and deprave it. His words are theſe: *Quin illæ ipſæ, quæ* DICTA *ſunt ac vocantur, quas certis diebus feſtæ licentiæ dicere ſolebamus, ſi paulum adhibita ratione fingerentur, aut aliquid in his ſerium quoque eſſet admixtum, plurimum poterunt utilitatis afferre: quæ nunc juvenum, aut ſibi ludentium exercitatio eſt.* [Quint. L. iv. c. 3.] Beſides, in Greece, the jeſter was a character by profeſſion, neceſſary to the pleaſantry of private feaſts, and, as we learn from the fine ſatyr in Xenophon's *Sympoſium*, even in that polite age, welcome to all companies.

From theſe reaſons I think it not difficult to account for the coarſeneſs of antient wit. The free genius of the Greek and Roman conſtitution was unqueſtionably its main ſpring and ſupport. But, when this character of their government was ſeconded by the freedom of their demagogues, the petulance of the ſtage, and the uncontrouled licence of recurring feſtival ſolemnities, it was no wonder, the illiberal manner ſo thoroughly infected all ranks and degrees of the people, as by no after diligence and refinement wholly to be removed. And this theory is

indeed confirmed by *fact*. For, when now the tyranny of one man had engroſſed the power, and oppreſſed the liberties, of Greece, their ſtage refined, their wit poliſhed, and Menander wrote. And though a thorough reform was never made in the Roman ſtage, partly, as Quintilian thinks, from the intractability of their language, but chiefly it may be, as to the point in queſtion, from the long continuance of their rude farcical ſhews, yet ſomething like this appears to have followed upon the loſs of their freedom; as is plain from the improved delicacy of their later critics; who, as Quintilian and Plutarch, are very profuſe in their encomiums on Menander, and the *new* comedy; whereas we find little ſaid of it by the Auguſtan writers, who ſeem generally to have preferred the coarſer wit and plaiſantry of the *old*. The ſtate of modern wit too confirms this account. For it has grown up, for the moſt part, under limited monarchies, in which their ſcenical entertainments were more moderate, or, for plain reaſons, muſt leſs affect the public taſt. Whenever therefore a turn for letters has prevailed, a poignant, but liberal kind of wit hath generally ſprung up with it. Where it is worth obſerving, the growing tyranny in ſome ſtates hath either extinguiſhed it entirely, or refined it into an effeminate, and timid delicacy, as the growing licentiouſneſs in others, hath ſunk it into a rude and brutal coarſeneſs; whilſt, by a due mixture of liberty and letters, we have ſeen it acquire a proper temperament at home, and, as managed by our beſt writers, exhibit a ſpecimen of that ſtrong, yet elegant ridicule, which hath never yet been equalled by any other nation in the world.

275. IGNOTUM TRAGICÆ GENUS INVENISSE CAMOENÆ &c.] The poet, having juſt remarked the negligence of the Roman writers, in two or three inſtances, and, at the ſame time, recommended to them the ſuperior care and accuracy of the Greeks (all which is elegantly preparatory to the laſt diviſion of the epiſtle) proceeds, in a ſhort view of the Greek drama, to inſinuate, as well, the ſucceſsful pains of the Greek writers, as the

real

real ſtate of the Roman ſtage; the complete glory of which could only be expected, as immediately follows, from a ſpirit of diligence and correctneſs. As this whole connection is clear and eaſy, ſo is the peculiar method, in which it is conducted, extremely proper. 1. To ſhew, how great the advantage of their ſituation was over that of the Greeks, he obſerves, that the latter had the whole conſtitution of the drama to invent and regulate; which, yet, by the application and growing experience of their poets, was ſoon effected; their tragedy, all rude and ſhapeleſs, as it was, in the cart of Theſpis, appearing in its juſt form and proportion on the ſtage of Æſchylus; and their comedy alſo (which, from that time, began to be cultivated) aſſerting its proper character, and, but for the culpable omiſſion of a chorus, reaching the full extent and perfection of its kind.

2. To ſhew, what ſtill remained to them, he brings down the hiſtory of tragedy no lower than Æſchylus; under whom it received its due form and all the eſſentials of its nature, yet ſtill wanted, to its abſolute perfection, the further accuracy and correctneſs of a Sophocles. And, for their comedy, he hints the principal defect of that; its omiſſion, after the manner of the new comedy, of the chorus. There is great addreſs in this conduct. The cenſure alſo, implied in it, is perfectly juſt. For, 1. the character of the Roman tragedy, in the times of Horace, was exactly that of Æſchylus. Æſchylus, ſays Quinctilian, was the firſt, "*qui protulit tragœdias*," i. e. who compoſed true legitimate tragedies, *ſublimis & gravis & grandiloquus ſæpe uſque ad vitium*; *ſed rudis in pleriſque & incompoſitus* [L. x. c. 1.] the very deſcription, which Horace gives [2 Ep. i. 165.] of the Roman tragedy.

natura ſublimis & acer,
Nam ſpirat tragicum ſatis & feliciter audet;
Sed turpem putat inſcitus metuitque lituram.

2. The ſtate of their comedy, as managed by their beſt writers, Afranius and Terence, was, indeed, much more complete; yet wanted the chorus, which, in the judgment

ment of the poet, it ſeems, was equally neceſſary to the perfection of this, as of the other drama.

3. But the application is made in expreſs terms.

Nil intentatum noſtri liquere poetæ, &c.

i. e. our poets, as well as the Greek, have, in ſome degree, applied themſelves to improve and regulate the ſtage. In particular, a late innovation, in taking their ſubjects, both of tragedy and comedy, from domeſtic facts, is highly to be applauded. Their ſole diſadvantage is, *a neglect or contempt of that labour and accuracy, which gave the laſt perfection to the Greek ſcene.*

After this clear and natural expoſition of the connection of theſe lines, all the difficulties, that have been found in them by certain great critics, vaniſh of themſelves. And the reader now ſees (what the ſagacious Heinſius thought impoſſible to be ſhewn) an ἀκολουθίαν, or conſiſtent, natural order in this part of the epiſtle; which was in imminent danger of loſing all its grace and beauty, by the wild tranſpoſitions of that critic.

278. POST HUNC PERSONAE PALLAEQUE, &c.] M. *Dacier* hath here puzzled himſelf with a difficulty of his own raiſing. He wonders, that Horace ſhould omit, in this hiſtory, the other improvements of Æſchylus, mentioned by Ariſtotle, and that Ariſtotle, in his turn, ſhould omit thoſe, mentioned by Horace. The truth is, neither of them intended a full and complete account of the improvements of the Greek ſtage; but only ſo much of them, as was neceſſary to the views of each. Ariſtotle, treating of the *internal* conſtitution of the drama, ſpeaks of ſuch changes, made in it by Æſchylus, as reſpected that end. Horace, treating in general of its *form*, as perfected by the pains and application of the ſame poet, ſelects thoſe improvements only, which contraſt beſt to the rude eſſays of Theſpis, and, while they imply the reſt, exhibit tragedy, as it were, in her proper perſon, on the ſtage. The reader feels the effect of this in the poetry.

288. VEL

288. VEL QUI PRAETEXTAS, VEL QUI DOCUERE TOGATAS.] There hath been much difficulty here in ſettling a very plain point. The queſtion is, whether *prætextas* means *tragedy*, or a ſpecies of *comedy?* The anſwer is very clear from Diomedes, whoſe account is, in ſhort, this. "[1] *Togatæ* is a general term for all ſorts "of Latin plays, adopting the Roman cuſtoms and "dreſſes; as *Palliatæ* is, for all, adopting the Græ-"cian. Of the *Togatæ*, the ſeveral [2] ſpecies are, "1. *Prætexta*, or *prætextata*, in which Roman kings or "generals were introduced, and is ſo called, becauſe the "*prætexta* was the diſtinguiſhing habit of ſuch perſons. "2. *Tabernaria*, frequently called [3] *Togata*, tho' that word, "as we have ſeen, had properly a larger ſenſe. 3. *Atel-*"*lana*. 4. *Planipedis*." He next marks the difference of theſe ſeveral ſorts of the *Togatæ*, from the ſimilar, correſponding ones of the *Palliatæ*, which are theſe: "1. [4] Tragœdia, abſolutely ſo ſtyled. 2. [5] Comœdia. "3. [6] Satyri. 4. [7] Μῖμος. [Theſe four ſorts of the *palliatæ* were alſo probably in uſe at Rome; certainly at leaſt, the two former.] It appears then from hence, that *prætextata* was properly the Roman tragedy. But he adds, "*Togata prætextata a tragœdia* "*differt*, and it is alſo ſaid, *to be only like tragedy*, *tra-*"*gœdiæ ſimilis*." What is this difference and this likeneſs? The explanation follows. "[8] Heroes are intro-"duced in *tragedy*, ſuch as Oreſtes, Chryſes, and the "like. In the *prætextata*, Brutus, Decius, or Marcellus." So then we ſee, when Græcian characters were introduced, it was called ſimply *tragœdia*; when Roman, *prætextata*; yet both tragedies. The ſole difference lay in the perſons being foreign, or domeſtic. The correſpondence in every other reſpect was exact. The ſame is obſerved of the Roman comedy; when it adopted [9] Greek characters, it was called *comœdia*: when Roman, [10] *Togata tabernaria*, or [3] *Togata*, ſimply. That the reader may aſſure himſelf of the fidelity of this account, let him take it at large, in the Grammarian's own words, "[1] Togatæ fabulæ dicuntur, "quæ ſcriptæ ſunt ſecundum ritus & habitus hominum "togatorum

" togatorum, id eſt. Romanorum (Toga namque Roma-
" na eſt) ſicut Græcas fabulas ab habitu æque palliatas
" Varro ait nominari. [3] Togatas autem cum ſit gene-
" rale nomen, ſpecialiter tamen pro tabernariis, non modo
" communis error uſurpat, ſed et poetæ.—Togatarum
" fabularum [2] ſpecies tot fere ſunt, quot et palliatarum.
" Nam prima ſpecies eſt togatarum, quæ prætextatæ di-
" cuntur, in quibus imperatorum negotia agebantur &
" publica, et reges Romani vel duces inducuntur, perſo-
" narum et argumentorum ſublimitate [4] tragœdiis ſimiles,
" Prætextatæ autem dicuntur, quia fere regum vel ma-
" giſtratuum, qui prætexta utuntur, in hujuſmodi fabulis
" acta comprehenduntur. Secunda ſpecies togatarum,
" quæ tabernariæ dicuntur, humilitate perſonarum & ar-
" gumentorum ſimilitudine [5] comœdiis pares—Tertia ſpe-
" cies eſt fabularum latinarum, quæ—Atellanæ dictæ ſunt
" ſimiles [6] ſatyricis fabulis Græcis. Quarta ſpecies eſt
" planipedis, Græce dicitur [7] Μῖμος. — Togata prætex-
" tata, a [4] tragœdia differt. In tragœdia [8] heroes intro-
" ducuntur. Pacuvius tragœdias nominibus heroicis ſcrip-
" ſit Oreſten, Chryſen, & his ſimilia. Item Accius. In
" prætextata, autem ſcribitur, Brutus, vel Decius, vel
" Marcellus. [10] Togata tabernaria a [5] comœdia differt,
" quod in [9] comœdia Græci ritus inducuntur, perſonæ-
" que Græcæ, Laches, Soſtrata. In illa vero Latinæ."
[L. iii. c. de Com. & Trag. diff.] With this account of Diomedes agrees perfectly that of *Feſtus*; from which however M. Dacier draws a very different concluſion. " Togatarum duplex eſt genus: prætextarum— & taber-
" nariarum" His inference is, that prætextatæ, as being a ſpecies of the togatæ, muſt needs be comedies; not conſidering that togata is here a generic term, comprehending under it all the ſeveral ſpecies both of tragedy and comedy. After what hath been ſaid, and eſpecially, after the full and deciſive teſtimony of Diomedes, there can no longer be any doubt about the meaning of *prætextas*; and one muſt be ſurprized to find M. Dacier prefacing his long note on this place in the following important manner, *C'eſt un des plus difficiles paſſages d'Horace, & peut-être celui qu'il eſt le plus mal aiſé d'eclaircir*

à cauſe

à cauſe du peu de lumiere que nous donnent les auteurs Latins ſur tout ce qui regarde leurs pieces de theatre.

281. SUCCESSIT VETUS HIS COMOEDIA, &c.] *i. e.* Comedy began to be cultivated and improved from the time, that tragedy had obtained its end, ἔσχε τὴν ἑαυτῆς φύσιν, under Æſchylus. There is no reaſon to ſuppoſe, that Horace meant to date its origin from hence.

284. TURPITER OBTICUIT—] Evidently becauſe, though the *jus nocendi* was taken away, yet that was no good reaſon, why the chorus ſhould entirely ceaſe. M. Dacier rambles, as uſual, in attempting to explain what he doth not underſtand. *Le chœur ſe tût ignominieuſement, parceque la loi reprima ſa licence, & que ce fut, à proprement parler, la loi qui le bannit; ce qu'Horace regarde comme une eſpece de flétriſſure* *Properly ſpeaking*, the law only aboliſhed the *abuſe* of the chorus. The ignominy lay in dropping the entire *uſe* of it, on account of this reſtraint. Horace was of opinion, that the chorus ought to have been retained, though the ſtate had abridged it of the licence, it ſo much delighted in, of an illimited, and intemperate ſatyr. *Sublatus chorus fuit*, ſays Scaliger, *cujus illæ videntur eſſe præcipuæ partes, ut potiſſimum quos liberet, læderet.*

286. NEC MINIMUM MERUERE DECUS VESTIGIA GRAECA AUSI DESERERE ET CELEBRARE DOMESTICA FACTA.] This judgment of the poet, recommending domeſtic ſubjects, as fitteſt for the ſtage, may be inforced from many obvious reaſons. As 1. that it renders the drama infinitely more *affecting*: and this, on many accounts. 1. As a ſubject, taken from our own annals, muſt of courſe carry with it an air of greater probability, at leaſt to the generality of the people, than one borrowed from thoſe of any other nation. 2. As we all find a perſonal intereſt in the ſubject. 3. As it of courſe affords the beſt and eaſieſt opportunities of catching our minds, by frequent and unavoidable references to our manners, prejudices, and cuſtoms. And of how great importance

tance this is, may be learned from hence, that, even in the exhibition of foreign characters, dramatic writers have found themſelves obliged to ſacrifice truth and propability to the humour of the people, and to dreſs up their perſonages, contrary to their own better judgment, in ſome degree, according to the mode and manners of their reſpective countries. This hath been well obſerved by a ſenſible French writer[a]. And 4. as the writer himſelf, from an intimate acquaintance with the character and genius of his own nation, will be more likely to draw the manners with life and ſpirit.

II. Next, which ſhould ever be one great point in view, it renders the drama more generally uſeful in its moral deſtination. For, it being converſant about domeſtic acts, the great inſtruction of the fable more ſenſibly affects us; and the characters exhibited, from the part we take in their good or ill qualities, will more probably influence our conduct.

III. Laſtly, this judgment will deſerve the greater regard, as the conduct recommended was, in fact, the practice of our great models, the Greek writers; in whoſe plays it is obſervable, there is ſcarcely a ſingle ſcene, which lies out of the confines of Greece.

But, notwithſtanding theſe reaſons, the practice hath, in all times, been but little followed. The Romans, after ſome few attempts in this way (from whence the poet took the occaſion of delivering it as a dramatic precept) ſoon relapſed into their old uſe; as appears from Seneca's, and the titles of other plays, written in, or after the Auguſtan age. Succeeding times continued the ſame attachment to Grecian, with the addition of an equal fondneſs for Ro-

a "L'étude égale des poëtes de différens tems à plaire à leurs ſpectateurs, "a encore influé dans la maniere de peindre les caracteres. Ceux qui pa-"roiſſent ſur la ſcene Angloiſe, Eſpagnole, Françoiſe, ſont plus Anglois, "Eſpagnols, ou François, que Grecs ou Romains, en un mot que ce qu'ils "doivent être. Il ne faut qu'un peu de diſcernement pour s'appercevoir que "nos Céſars & nos Achilles, en gardant même une partie de leur caractere "primitif, prennent droit de naturalité dans le païs où ils ſont tranſplantez, "ſemblables à ces portraits, qui ſortent de la main d'un paintre Flamand, "Italien, ou François, & qui portent l'empreinte du païs. On veut "plaire à ſa nation, & rien ne plait tant que la reſemblance de manieres "& de génie." [P. Brumoy, vol. i. p. 200.]

man

man ſubjects. The reaſon in both inſtances hath been ever the ſame: that ſtrong and early prejudice, approaching ſomewhat to adoration, in favour of the illuſtrious names of thoſe two great ſtates. The account of this matter is very eaſy; for their writings, as they furniſh the buſineſs of our younger, and the amuſement of our riper years, and more eſpecially make the ſtudy of all thoſe, who devote themſelves to poetry and the ſtage, inſenſibly infix in us an exceſſive veneration for all affairs, in which they were concerned; inſomuch that no other ſubjects or events ſeem conſiderable enough, or riſe, in any proportion, to our ideas of the dignity of the tragic ſcene, but ſuch as time and long admiration have conſecrated in the annals of their ſtory. Our Shakeſpear was, I think, the firſt that broke through this bondage of claſſical ſuperſtition. And he owed this felicity, as he did ſome others, to his want of what is called the advantage of a learned education. Thus, uninfluenced by the weight of early prepoſſeſſion, he ſtruck at once into the road of nature and common ſenſe: and without deſigning, without knowing it, hath left us in his hiſtorical plays, with all their anomalies, an exacter reſemblance of the Athenian ſtage, than is anywhere to be found in its moſt profeſs'd admirers and copyiſts.

I will only add, that, for the more ſucceſsful execution of this rule of celebrating domeſtic acts, much will depend on the æra, from whence the ſubject is taken. Times too remote have almoſt the ſame inconveniences, and none of the advantages, which attend the ages of Greece and Rome. And, for thoſe of later date, they are too much familiariz'd to us, and have not as yet acquired that venerable caſt and air, which tragedy demands, and age only can give. There is no fixing this point with preciſion. In the general, that æra is the fitteſt for the poet's purpoſe, which, though freſh enough in our minds to warm and intereſt us in the event of the action, is yet at ſo great a diſtance from the preſent times, as to have loſt all thoſe mean and diſparaging circumſtances, which unavoidably adhere to recent deeds, and, in ſome meaſure,

ſink

ſink the nobleſt modern tranſactions to the level of ordinary life.

295. INGENIUM MISERA, &c.] *Sæpe audivi poetam bonum neminem (id quod a Democrito & Platone in ſcriptis relictum eſſe dicunt) ſine inflammatione animorum exiſtere poſſe & ſine quodam afflatu quaſi furoris* [Cic. De orat. L. ii. c. xlvi.] And ſo Petronius, *præcipitandus liber ſpiritus, ut furentis animi vaticinatio appareat* [c. cxviii.] And to the ſame purpoſe every good critic, ancient or modern. But who can endure the grimace of thoſe minute *genii*, who, becauſe the truly inſpired, in the ravings of the fit, are *touched* with the flame and fury of enthuſiaſm, muſt, therefore, with a tame, frigid fancy, be laying claim to the ſame fervent and fiery raptures? The fate of theſe *aſpirants* to divinity is that ἐνθουσιᾷν ἑαυτοῖς δοκοῦντες, ὑ βακχιῶσιν, ἀλλὰ παίζουσιν [Longin. περ. υψ. τμημ. χ.] And Quinctilian opens the myſtery of the whole matter: *Quo quiſque ingenio minus valet, hoc ſe magis attollere & dilatare conatur: ut ſtatura breves in digitos eriguntur & plura infirmi minantur. Nam tumidos et corruptos & tinnulos & quocunque alio cacozeliæ genere peccantes, certum habeo, non virium, ſed infirmitatis vitio laborare: ut corpora non robore ſed valetudine inflantur: & recto itinere lapſi plerumque divertunt.* [L. ii. c. 3.]

298. BONA PARS NON UNGUES, &c.] The conſtant and pitiful affectation of the race, before ſpoken of, who, with the modeſty of laying claim to the *thing*, will be ſure not to omit the *ſign*, and ſo, from fancying an inſpiration, they have *not*, come to adopt every foppery, that has ever diſgraced it in thoſe, who *have*.

309. SCRIBENDI RECTE, SAPERE EST ET PRINCIPIUM ET FONS.] The Orator was of the ſame mind, when he ſent his pupil to the academy for inſtruction. *Quis neſcit maximam vim exiſtere oratoris in hominum mentibus vel ad iram, aut dolorem incitandis, vel ab hiſce iiſdem permotionibus ad lenitatem miſericordiamque revocandis? quæ, niſi qui naturas hominum, vimque omnem humanitatis, cauſaſque*

cauſaſque eas, quibus mentes aut incitantur aut reflectuntur, penitus perſpexerit, dicendo, quod volet, perficere non poterit. Atqui TOTUS HIC LOCUS PHILOSOPHORUM PROPRIUS VIDETUR. [De Orat. L. i. c. xiii.] And he ſpoke, we know, from his own experience, *having acquired his oratorial ſkill not in the ſchools of the rhetoricians, but the walks of the academy : fateor me oratorem, ſi modo ſim, aut etiam quicunque ſim, non ex rhetorum officinis, ſed ex Academiæ ſpatiis extitiſſe.* [Orat. p. 622. Elz. ed.] But the reaſon he gives for this advice, though common to the poet, whoſe character, as well as the orator's, it is, *poſſe voluntates impellere, quo velis, unde velis, deducere*, is, yet, not the only one, which reſpects the poet. For his buſineſs is to *paint*, and that not only, as the orator does, in order to move, but for the ſole end of *pleaſing : ſolam petit voluptatem.* [Quinct. L. x. c. 1.] The boaſt of his art is to catch every different aſpect of nature, and more eſpecially to exhibit the human character in every varying light and form, under which it preſents itſelf. But this is not to be done without an exquiſite ſtudy, and philoſophical knowledge of man; to which end, as is remarked in *n.* on ℣ 317. the Socratic philoſophy is more peculiarly adapted. Add to this, that it is of the genius of true poetry, not only to animate, but to *perſonalize* every thing, *omnia debent eſſe morata.* Hence the indiſpenſable neceſſity of moral ſcience : all poetry being, in effect, what Mr. Dryden ſomewhere calls comedy, THE THEFT OF POETS FROM MANKIND.

310. SOCRATICAE CHARTAE.] An admired writer, in many reſpects deſervedly ſo, thus comments on theſe words : " The philoſophical writings, to which our poet " refers, were in themſelves a kind of poetry, like the " *mimes*, or perſonated pieces of early times, before phi- " loſophy was in vogue, and when as yet *Dramatical* " *imitation* was ſcarce formed : or at leaſt, in many parts, " not brought to due perfection. They were pieces, " which, beſides their force of ſtyle, and hidden numbers, " carried a ſort of *action* and *imitation*, the ſame as the " *Epic* and *Dramatic* kinds. They were either real dia-

" logues, or recitals of ſuch perſonated diſcourſes; where " the perſons themſelves had their characters preſerved " throughout; their manners, humours, and diſtinct turns " of temper and underſtanding maintained, according to " the moſt exact poetical truth. 'Twas not enough, that " theſe pieces treated fundamentally of morals, and, in " conſequence, pointed out real characters and manners: " They exhibited them alive, and ſet the countenances " and complexions of men plainly in view. And by this " means they not only taught us to know others; but, " what was principal and of higheſt virtue in them, they " taught us to know ourſelves." Thus far then theſe models are of unqueſtioned uſe to writers of every denomination. I forbear to mention, what this noble author finds occaſion frequently to inſinuate, and, by his own practice, labours to recommend, the ſuperior excellency of the *manner*, as well as *matter*, of theſe highly-rated originals. Not that I preſume to think them unworthy of imitation. But the public taſte, as appears, is running full faſt that way, inſomuch that ſome may even ſtart a doubt, if the ſtate of literary compoſition be more endangered by the neglect, or vicious imitation, of the ancients. The graces of the Platonic manner, when ſparingly employed by a real genius, for the embelliſhment of ſtrong ſenſe, have, it muſt be owned, great beauty, as the public hath, with infinite pleaſure and inſtruction ſeen, in the caſe of a late truly Socratic writer [a]. But when this humour of *platonizing*, ſeizes on ſome minuter ſpirit, bent on ennobling a trivial matter, and all over-run with academic delicacy and affectation, nothing, to a juſt and manly reliſh, is more offenſive and diſguſting. One muſt wink hard not to ſee frequent examples of this, in the maſter Platoniſt himſelf. But ſome inferior workmen have gone much farther. One of the beſt of them, a writer, whoſe talents of learning and ingenuity, one laments to ſee thus miſuſed, begins a letter in this ſtrain, " Do you remember, my dear friend, to have read with wonder, the " Mantuan bard's account of the ſource of life and origin " of men?

[a] Mr. *Hutcheſon.*

Principio

Principio cœlum ac terras, campoſque liquentes,
Lucentemque globum lunæ, Titaniaque aſtra
Spiritus intus alit.

What now would the reader expect this opening was to introduce? Surely ſome abſtruſe and learned ſpeculations concerning the all-informing ſoul of the world, ſome deep reſearch into the very *penetralia* of Platoniſm. Nothing leſs. He goes on to apply it thus. "Your laſt letter "brought the concluſive ſtroke of this deſcription freſh "to my mind." How ſo? Why, "Now, ſaid I, Mr. "*** is certainly not only quite recovered, but his genius "blooms; here he is *in ſpirit*, if not in perſon." Indeed: And was it for this momentous application, that the Man- "tuan bard's wondrous account of the ſource of life and "origin of men" was ſo importantly called in?

But hear him again introduce himſelf, on another occaſion, in a more familiar manner: "You begin to have "ſome *lueurs*, you ſay, of what this fame mythology "would be at; but are apprehenſive, if you purſue, that "it will lead you aſtray, and like *Will-with-the-Whiſp*, "land you in a quagmire." This it is to have a knack *of ſaying a plain thing prettily*. Yet who would ſuſpect, that ſuch prettineſs ſhould paſs current, for the true antique manner, and, under that perſuaſion, have the good fortune to be deemed, by our modern men of taſte, *fine writing?*

317. VERAS HINC DUCERE VOCES.] *Truth*, in poetry, means ſuch an expreſſion, as conforms to the general nature of things; *falſhood*, that, which however ſuitable to the particular inſtance in view, doth yet not correſpond to ſuch *general nature*. To attain to this *truth* of expreſſion in dramatic poetry two things are preſcribed: 1. A diligent ſtudy of the Socratic philoſophy; and 2. A maſterly knowledge and comprehenſion of human life. The firſt, becauſe it is the peculiar diſtinction of that ſchool, *Ad veritatem vitæ propius accedere*. [Cic. de Orat. L. i. c. 51.] And the *latter*, as rendering the imitation more univerſally ſtriking. This will be underſtood in re-

flecting, *that truth may be followed too cloſely in works of imitation*; that is, the artiſt, attaching himſelf too cloſely to the ſcrupulous exhibition of *particulars*, fails of repreſenting the general idea of the *kind*: in which ſenſe it is, that Demetrius, the ſtatuary, is reprehended by a very good judge, as being *nimius in veritate*. [Quinctil. L. xii. c. 10.] And a great painter, Caravage, hath been alſo cenſured on the ſame account. [Vies des peintres, Entr. vi.] The ſame holds in poetry, as we are told by an authority above exception,

Le vrai peut quelquefois n' être pas vraiſemblable.
Boil. A. P. c. iii. ℣ 48.

But how, it will ſtill be aſked, can truth of any kind ariſe from the violation of truth? The plain anſwer is, in deviating from particular and partial, the poet more faithfully imitates univerſal truth. And thus an anſwer occurs to that refined argument, which Plato invented and urged, with much ſeeming complacency, againſt poetry. It is, that *poetical imitation is at a great diſtance from truth.* Poetical expreſſion, ſays the philoſopher, is the copy of the poet's own conceptions, the poet's conceptions of things, and things of the ſtanding archetype, as exiſting in the divine mind. Thus the poet's expreſſion, is a copy at third hand, from the primary, original truth. [Plat. De rep. L. x.] Now the diligent ſtudy of this rule of the poet obviates this reaſoning at once. For, by abſtracting from exiſtences all that peculiarly reſpects and diſcriminates the *individual*, the poet's conception, as it were neglecting the intermediate particular objects, catches, as far as may be, and reflects the divine archetypal idea, and ſo becomes itſelf the copy or image of truth. Hence too we are taught the force of that unuſual encomium on poetry by the great critic, *that it is ſomething more ſevere and philoſophical than hiſtory*, φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν. The reaſon follows, which is now very intelligible; ἡ μὲν γὰρ ποίησις μᾶλλον τὰ καθόλου, ἡ δ' ἱστορία τὰ καθ' ἕκαστον λέγει. [Περ. ποιητ. κ. θ.] And this will further explain an eſſential difference, as we

are told, between the two great rivals of the Greek ſtage. Sophocles, in return to ſuch as objected a want of truth in his characters, uſed to plead, *that he drew men ſuch as they ought to be, Euripides ſuch as they were.* Σοφοκλῆς ἔφη, αὐτὸς μὲν οἵους δεῖ ποιεῖν, Εὐριπίδης δὲ οἷοί εἰσι. [Περ. ποιητ. κ. κε.] The meaning of which is, Sophocles, from his more extended commerce with mankind, had enlarged and widened the narrow, partial conception, ariſing from the contemplation of *particular* characters, into a complete comprehenſion of the *kind.* Whereas the philoſophic Euripides, having been moſtly converſant in the academy, when he came to look abroad into life, keeping his eye too intent on ſingle, really exiſting perſonages, ſunk the *kind* in the *individual*; and ſo, like *Demetrius*, painted his figures naturally indeed, and *truly*, with regard to the objects in view, but ſometimes without that general and univerſally ſtriking likeneſs, which is demanded to the full exhibition of poetical truth.

But here an objection meets us, which muſt not be overlooked. It will be ſaid, "that philoſophic ſpeculations are more likely to render mens views *abſtract* and *general* than to confine them to *individuals.* This latter is a fault ariſing from the *ſmall number* of objects men happen to contemplate: and may be removed not only by taking a view of many *particulars*, which is knowledge of the world; but alſo by reflecting on the *general nature* of men, as it appears in good books of morality. For the writers of ſuch books form their *general* notion of human nature from an extenſive experience (either their own, or that of others) without which their writings are of no value." The anſwer, I think, is this. *By reflecting on the general nature of man* the philoſopher learns, what is the tenor of action ariſing from the predominancy of certain qualities or properties: *i. e.* in general, what that conduct is, which the imputed character requires. But to perceive clearly and certainly, how far, and with what degree of ſtrength this or that character will, on particular occaſions, moſt probably ſhew itſelf, this is the fruit only of a knowledge of the world. Inſtances of a want of this know-

ledge cannot be ſuppoſed frequent in ſuch a writer, as Euripides; nor, when they occur, ſo glaring, as to ſtrike a common reader. They are niceties, which can only be diſcerned by the penetration of the true critic; and even to *him*, at this diſtance of time, from an ignorance of the Greek manners, that may poſſibly appear a fault, which is a real beauty. It would therefore be dangerous to think of pointing out the places, which Ariſtotle might believe liable to this cenſure in Euripides. I will however preſume to mention one, which, if not juſtly criticized, will, at leaſt, ſerve to illuſtrate my meaning.

The ſtory of his *Electra* is well known. The poet had to paint, in the character of this princeſs, a virtuous, but fierce, reſentful woman; ſtung by a ſenſe of perſonal ill treatment; and inſtigated to the revenge of a father's death, by ſtill ſtronger motives. A diſpoſition of this warm temperament, it might be concluded by the philoſopher in his cloſet, would be prompt to ſhew itſelf. *Electra* would, on any proper occaſion, be ready to avow her reſentment, as well as to forward the execution of her purpoſe. But to what lengths would this *reſentment* go? *i. e.* what degree of fierceneſs might *Electra* expreſs, without affording occaſion to a perſon, widely ſkilled in mankind, and the operation of the paſſions, to ſay, "this "is improbable"? Here abſtract theories will be of little ſervice. Even a moderate acquaintance with real life will be unable to direct us. Many individuals may have fallen under obſervation, that will juſtify the poet in carrying the expreſſion of ſuch a *reſentment* to any extreme. Hiſtory would, perhaps, furniſh examples, in which a virtuous reſentment hath been carried even farther than is here repreſented by the poet. What way then of determining the preciſe bounds and limits of it? Only by obſerving, in numerous inſtances, *i. e.* from a large extenſive knowledge of practical life, how far it uſually, in ſuch characters, and under ſuch circumſtances, prevails. Hence a difference of repreſentation will ariſe in proportion to the extent of that *knowledge*. Let us now ſee, how the character before us, hath, in fact, been managed by Euripides.

In

In that fine ſcene, which paſſes between Electra and Oreſtes, whom as yet ſhe ſuſpects not to be her brother, the converſation very naturally turns upon Electra's diſtreſſes, and the author of them, Clytæmneſtra, as well as on her hopes of deliverance from them by the means of Oreſtes. The dialogue upon this proceeds:

Or. What then of Oreſtes, were he to return to this Argos?

El. Ah! wherefore that queſtion, when there is no proſpect of his return at all?

Or. But ſuppoſing his return, how would he go about to revenge the death of his father?

El. In the ſame way, in which that father ſuffered from the daring attempts of his enemies.

Or. And could you then dare to undertake with him the murder of your mother?

El. Yes, with that very ſteel, with which ſhe murdered my father.

Or. And am I at liberty to relate this to your brother, as your fixed reſolution?

El. I deſire only to live, till I have murdered my mother. The Greek is ſtill ſtronger:

May I die, as ſoon as I have murdered my mother!

Now that this laſt ſentence is abſolutely unnatural, will not be pretended. There have been doubtleſs many examples, under the like circumſtances, of an expreſſion of revenge carried thus far. Yet, I think, we can hardly help being a little ſhocked at the fierceneſs of *this* expreſſion. At leaſt *Sophocles* has not thought fit to carry it to that extreme. In him, *Electra* contents herſelf with ſaying to *Oreſtes*, on a ſimilar occaſion:

"The conduct of this affair now reſts upon you. Only "let me obſerve this to you, that, had I been left alone, "I would not have failed in one of theſe two purpoſes, "either to deliver myſelf glorioufly, or to periſh glori-"ouſly."

Whether this repreſentation of Sophocles be not more agreeable to *truth*, as collected from wide obſervation,

i. e. from human nature at large, than that of Euripides, the capable reader will judge. If it be, the reaſon I ſuppoſe to have been, *that Sophocles painted his characters, ſuch, as, from attending to numerous inſtances of the ſame kind, he would conclude they ought to be; Euripides, ſuch, as a narrower ſphere of obſervation had perſuaded him they were.*

319. INTERDUM SPECIOSA LOCIS, &c.] The poet's ſcience in *ethics* will principally ſhew itſelf in theſe two ways, 1. in furniſhing proper matter for general reflexion on human life and conduct; and, 2. in a due adjuſtment of the manners. By the former of theſe two applications of moral knowledge a play becomes, what the poet calls, *ſpecioſa locis*, i. e. (for the term is borrowed from the rhetoricians) *ſtriking in its moral topics:* a merit of the higheſt importance on the ancient ſtage, and which, if prudently employed in ſubſerviency to the *latter* more eſſential requiſite of the drama, *a juſt expreſſion of the manners*, will deſerve to be ſo reputed at all times, and on every theatre. The danger is, leſt a ſtudied, declamatory moral, affectedly introduced, or indulged to an immoderate degree, ſhould prejudice the natural exhibition of the characters, and ſo convert *the image of human life* into an unaffecting, philoſophical dialogue.

319. MORATAQUE RECTE FABULA, &c.] This judgment of the poet, in regard of the ſuperior efficacy of *manners*, is generally thought to be contradicted by Ariſtotle; who, in treating this ſubject, obſerves, "that, "let a piece be never ſo perfect in the *manners*, *ſenti-*"*ments*, and *ſtyle*, it will not ſo well anſwer the end and "purpoſe of tragedy, as if defective in theſe, and finiſhed "only in the fable and compoſition." Ἐάν τις ἐφεξῆς θῇ ῥήσεις ἠθικὰς καὶ λέξεις καὶ διανοίας εὖ πεποιημένας, ἀ ποιήσει ὃ ἦν τῆς τραγῳδίας ἔργον, ἀλλὰ πολὺ μᾶλλον ἡ καταδεὴς ἐροῖς τούτοις κεχρημένη τραγῳδία, ἔχουσα δὲ μῦθον καὶ σύστασιν πραγμάτων. Κεφ. 5. M. Dacier thinks to clear this matter by ſaying, "that what Ariſto-"tle remarks holds true of tragedy, but not of comedy,

"of

" of which alone Horace is here ſpeaking." But granting, that the artificial contexture of the fable is leſs neceſſary to the perfection of comedy, than of tragedy [a], yet, the tenor of this whole diviſion, exhorting to correctneſs in general, makes it unqueſtionable, that Horace muſt intend to include *both*. The caſe, as it ſeems to me, is this. The poet is not comparing the reſpective importance of the *fable* and *manners*, but of the *manners* and *diction*, under this word including alſo *numbers*. He gives them the preference *not* to a *good plot*, nor even to *fine ſentiments*, but to *verſus inopes rerum nugæque canoræ*. The *art* he ſpeaks of, is the art of *expreſſing* the thoughts properly, gracefully, and harmoniouſly: the *pondus* is the force and energy of good *verſification*. *Venus* is a general term including both kinds of beauty. *Fabula* does not mean the *fable* (in diſtinction from the reſt) but ſimply *a play*.

323. GRAIIS INGENIUM, &c.] The Greeks being eminent for *philoſophy*, eſpecially *morals*; the laſt obſervation naturally gives riſe to this. For the tranſition is eaſy from their ſuperiority, as philoſophers, to their ſuperiority as poets; and the more eaſy, as the latter is ſhewn to be, in part, the effect of the former. Now this ſuperiority of the Greeks in genius and eloquence (which would immediately occur, on mentioning the *Socraticæ chartæ*) being ſeen and confeſſed, we are led to aſk, " whence this ariſes." The anſwer is, from their making *glory*, not *gain*, the object of their wiſhes.

330. AERUGO ET CURA PECULI CUM SEMEL IMBUERIT, &c.] This *love of gain*, to which Horace imputes

[a] It is here allowed, *that the artful conſtitution of the fable is leſs eſſential to comedy, than tragedy*, though M. Dacier hath only given us his word for it. A reaſon will perhaps with ſome, go farther, which may be given thus: " The chief excellencies of comedy are *wit and humour*. Now *wit*, " in the higheſt degree, may conſiſt with a bad *fable*, and even with in- " judicious *characters*, as appears in ſome of Congreve's plays. And though " *humour* requires great art and genius in drawing characters, yet none at " all in the fable. *Moliere's Miſanthrope* is reputed by ſome to be one of " the beſt comedies in the world; and yet the conduct of the plot is poor " and inartificial in the loweſt degree. But now the chief aim and excel- " lence of *tragedy* is to move *compaſſion*; and this depends much, nay " *principally*, on the artful conſtitution of the *fable*."

imputes the imperfect ſtate of the Roman poetry, hath been uniformly aſſigned, by the wiſdom of antient times, as the ſpecific bane of arts and letters. *Longinus* and *Quintilian* account, from hence, for the decay of eloquence, *Galen* of phyſic, *Petronius* of painting, and *Pliny*, of the whole circle of the liberal arts. An ingenious modern, indeed, is for carrying his views much further. He, it ſeems, would account [Refl. ſur la Poeſ. & ſur la Peint. v. ii. § xiv.] for this *public degeneracy* of taſte and literature, not from the malignity of the ſelfiſh paſſions, but the baleful influences of the air; emulating, I ſuppoſe, herein, the wiſdom of that philoſophy, which teaches to lay the *private degeneracy* of individuals on the ſtars. Thus much however may be true, that other cauſes have generally co-operated with it. Some of theſe, as might be ſhewn, did not eſcape the attention of theſe wiſe antients. Yet they did right to inſiſt chiefly on *this*, which is every way equal to the effect, aſcribed to it. It is ſo in its *nature:* For being, as Longinus calls it, νόσημα μικροποιὸν, *a diſeaſe which narrows and contracts the ſoul*, it muſt, of courſe, reſtrain the generous efforts and expanſions of genius; cramp the free powers and energies of the mind, and render it unapt to open itſelf to wide views, and to the projection of great, extenſive deſigns. It is ſo in its *conſequences*. For, as one ſays elegantly, *when the paſſion of avarice grows general in a country, the temples of honour are ſoon pulled down, and all men's ſacrifices are made to Fortune*[a]. Thus extinguiſhing the ſenſe of honour, that divineſt movement in our frame, and the only one, which can invigorate and ſupport the mind under the long labours of invention, it muſt needs be, that the fire and high ſpirit of genius go out with it; and dragging in its train the *love of pleaſure*, that unmanlieſt of all the paſſions, it diffuſes ſuch a languor and impotency over the mind, as muſt leave it at length a prey to a ſupine and waſting indolence; till, as Longinus obſerves of his own age, (and let every friend to letters deprecate the

[a] Sir *William Temple.*

omen)

omen) πάντες ἐσκαλαβισῦμεν, ὄκ ἄλλως πονῦντες, ἢ αναλαμβάνοντες, εἰ μὴ ἐπαίνυ, ἢ ἡδονῆς ἕνεκα, ἀλλὰ μὴ τῆς ζήλυ ἢ τιμῆς ἀξίας ποτὲ ὠφελείας.

333. AUT PRODESSE VOLUNT, AUT DELECTARE POETAE, &c.] Though theſe lines have the appearance of general criticiſm, yet do they more eſpecially reſpect the dramatic poeſy. This will be evident from attending to the context. The full boaſt and glory of the drama is to *delight* and *inſtruct* mankind. 1. The latter praiſe was more eſpecially due to the antient tragic muſe, who did not think it ſufficient to paint lovely pourtraitures of *public* and *ſocial* virtue, and to call in the moralizing chorus to her aſſiſtance, but, which was one of her diſcriminating characters, ſhe was perpetually inculcating every branch of true moral in thoſe brief ſententious precepts, which inform and ſolemnize her page. To theſe precepts then the poet manifeſtly refers in thoſe lines,

Quicquid præcipies, eſto brevis: ut cito dicta,
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.

But what follows is ſtill clearer, [2.] The other end of the drama is to *entertain*, and this by the means of *probable fiction*.

Ficta, voluptatis cauſa, ſint proxima veris.

And the poet applies this to the caſe of the drama in expreſs words:

Ne quodcunque volet, poſcat ſibi fabula credi:
Neu pranſæ Lamiæ vivum puerum extrahat alvo.

The inſtance of *Lamia*, as Mr. Dacier obſerves, is certainly taken from ſome poet of that time, who had been guilty of this miſconduct. The reader may learn from hence, how intently Horace purſues his deſign of criticizing the *Roman ſtage*, when, in treating a ſubject, from its nature, the moſt general of any in the epiſtle, *viz. critical correctneſs*, we yet find him ſo induſtriouſly recurring to this point.

363. HAEC AMAT OBSCURUM, VOLET HAEC SUB LUCE VIDERI.] Cicero hath given the ſame precept in relation to oratory, *habeat illa in dicendo admiratio ac ſumma laus umbram aliquam et receſſum, quo magis id, quod erit illuminatum, extare atque eminere videatur.* [De orat. L. iii. c. xxvi.]

373. MEDIOCRIBUS ESSE POETIS NON HOMINES, &c.] This judgment, however ſevere it may ſeem, is juſt, and ſtrictly conformable to the practice of the beſt critics. We have a remarkable inſtance in the caſe of *Apollonius Rhodius*, who, though in the judgment of Quinctilian, the author of a no contemptible poem, yet on account of that *equal mediocrity*, which every where prevails in him, was ſtruck out of the liſt of good writers by ſuch ſovereign judges of poetical merit, as Ariſtophanes and Ariſtarchus [Quinct. L. x. c. 1.]

403. DICTAE PER CARMINA SORTES,] Oracles were little regarded, till Ambition had inſpired great and eventful deſigns, and, by involving the fate of nations, had rendered the knowledge of futurity important. Hence, in marking the progreſs of antient poeſy, Horace judiciouſly poſtpones *oracles* to the *celebration* of martial *proweſs*, as being that, which gave the principal occaſion to them. This ſpecies of poetry then is rightly placed, tho' it be true, as the commentators have objected, that oracles were much antienter than Homer, and the Trojan war.

404. ET VITAE MONSTRATA VIA EST;] Meaning the writings of *Theognis*, *Phocylides*, *Heſiod*, and others, which, conſiſting wholly of moral precepts, are elegantly ſaid to lay open, or diſcover *the road of life*. Mr. Dacier's interpretation, which makes the poet mean *phyſics* by *viam vitæ*, is highly ridiculous, and founded on no reaſon. *Il ne faut pas*, ſays he, *entendre ceci de la philoſophie et des mœurs*; CAR *Horace ſe contrediroit, puiſque il a dit que ce fut le premier ſoin de la poeſie.* The learned

learned critic did not conſider, that the firſt care of poeſy, as explained above, and as employed by *Orpheus* and *Amphion*, was to inculcate *policy*, not *moral*.

404. ET GRATIA REGUM, PIERIIS TENTATA MODIS, LUDUSQUE REPERTUS ET LONGORUM OPERUM FINIS: NE FORTE PUDORI SIT TIBI MUSA LYRAE SOLERS, ET CANTOR APOLLO.] This is one of thoſe maſter-ſtrokes, which make the ſovereign charm of this poet. But the way, in which it hath been underſtood, extinguiſhes all its grace and beauty. *On les vers employa*, ſays an interpreter, who ſpeaks the ſenſe of the reſt, *à gagner la faveur des rois, & on les mit de tous les jeux & de tous les ſpectacles, qu'on inventa pour ſe delaſſer de ſes longs travaux & de toutes ſes fatigues. Je vous dis cela afin que vous n'ayez point de honte de faire la cour aux Muſes & à Apollon.* And, leſt this ſhould not ſeem explicit enough, he adds in a couple of notes, that by *ludus repertus* &c. *il* [le poete] *veut parler des tragedies & des comedies que l'on faiſoit jouer dans les fêtes ſelemnelles.* And then, as to the *ne forte pudori*, *Cela prouve qu' Horace ne fait cet eloge de la poeſie que pour empecher que Piſon n'en fût degouté.* Can any thing be more inſipid? For could the poet think ſo meanly of his art, as to believe it wanted an apology? Or had the *courtier* ſo little addreſs, as to direct that apology immediately to the Piſo's? Beſides, what ſpecies of poeſy is it, that he labours to excuſe? why, according to this interpretation, the *dramatic*: the ſupreme boaſt of his art, and the main ſubject of the epiſtle. And in what *manner* does he excuſe it? Why, in recommending it, as an agreeable amuſement. But his maſter, Ariſtotle, would have furniſhed him with a nobler plea: and 'tis certain, the antients talked at another rate of the uſe and end of the drama. Let us ſee then, if the ſenſe, given in the commentary, will bring any relief to the poet. In fact, this whole paſſage [from *et vitæ*, &c. to *cantor Apollo*] obliquely glances at the two ſorts of poetry, peculiarly cultivated by himſelf, and is an indirect apology for his own choice of them. For 1. *vitæ monſtrata*

ſtrata via eſt is the character of his *ſermones*. And 2. all the reſt, of his *Odes*. Theſe are recommended, agreeably to their nature, 1. as of uſe to *conciliate the favour of princes*; hereby glancing at the ſucceſs of his own odes, and, with the happieſt addreſs, inſinuating the regard, which Auguſtus paid to letters. 2. As contributing to the mirth and entertainment of feaſts, and eſpecially as holding a principal place in the celebration of thoſe more ſacred, ſecular feſtivities (*longorum operum finem*) which could not be duly ſolemnized, without the miniſtration of the lyric muſe.

Caſtis cum pueris ignara puella mariti,
Diſceret unde preces, vatem ni muſa dediſſet?
2 Ep. i. 132.

And again: *ego Diis amicum*
Sæculo feſtas referente luces
Reddidi carmen, docilis modorum
Vatis Horati. Carm. ſec.

In another place both ends are expreſſed:

teſtudo
Divitum MENSIS *& amica* TEMPLIS. 3 O. xi.

Where it may be obſerved, this double character of lyric poetry exactly correſponds to that, which the poet had before expreſly given of it in this very epiſtle: the *gratia regum* being the ſame as

Muſa dedit fidibus Divos puroſque Deorum
Et pugilem victorem & equum certamine primum. ℣ 83.

And *luduſque repertus*, deſcribing its other office,

Et juvenum curas & libera vina referre. ib.

In this view the following line, which apologizes, not for poeſy in general, or, its nobleſt ſpecies, the drama, but for his own lyrics only, hath, as the reader perceives, infinite grace; and is peculiarly marked with that vein of exquiſite humour and pleaſantry, ſo ſuited to the genius of the epiſtle, and which makes one of the diſtinguiſhing beauties

beauties of the poet. It hath alſo an extreme *propriety*; the levity of the ode admitting, or rather requiring, ſome apology to the Piſo's; who would be naturally led to think but meanly of it, in compariſon of the ſublimer dramatic poetry. I muſt add, the very terms of the apology ſo expreſly define and characterize lyric poetry, that it is ſomething ſtrange, it ſhould have eſcaped vulgar notice: *muſa lyræ ſolers* being evidently explained by *Romanæ fidicen lyræ* [4 O. iii. 23.] and the epithet *cantor*, deſcribing Apollo, as plainly as words can do it, in the peculiar character of *Lyric*.

407. CANTOR APOLLO. NATURA FIERET, &c.] The tranſition is delicate, and a fine inſtance of that kind of method, which the Epiſtle demands. The poet had juſt been ſpeaking of the ode, and its inſpirer, *cantor Apollo*; and this, in the natural train of his ideas, ſuggeſted that enthuſiaſm, and ſtretch of genius, which is at once the characteriſtic and glory of the lyric compoſition. And this was ground enough, in an Epiſtle, to paſs on to ſay ſomething concerning the power and influence of genius in poetry in general. It was for want of attending to ſo plain a reflection, as this, that the excellent Heinſius trifled ſo egregiouſly, in his tranſpoſitions of the Epiſtles, and in particular of this very place. And the ignorant cenſures of M. Dacier are apparently owing to no other cauſe. See his introduct. remarks.

408. NATURA FIERET LAUDABILE CARMEN AN ARTE.] It will be curious to obſerve, what perpetual matter of debate this queſtion hath furniſhed to the antient learned.

It ſeems firſt to have taken its riſe from the high pretenſion of poets to inſpiration, [ſee Pind. Od. iii. Nem.] which were afterwards underſtood in too literal a ſenſe, and in time extended to all works of genius or imitation. The orator, who, as Cicero tells us, is *near a-kin to the poet*, ſet up the ſame claim; principally, as it ſhould ſeem, on the authority of Socrates, who taking occaſion, from

from the ill uſe that had been made of *rhetoric*, to decry it, as an *art*, was followed herein by the moſt illuſtrious of his ſcholars, amongſt whom was Ariſtotle, [Quinct. L. ii. c. 17.] who had written a ſet treatiſe profeſſedly with this view, though his books of rhetoric proceed on very different principles. The queſtion afterwards appeared of ſo much moment to Cicero, that he diſcuſſed it in form, in one of his dialogues De oratore. And Quinctilian, in ſtill later times, found himſelf obliged to reſume the ſame debate, and hath accordingly conſidered it in an entire chapter. The long continuance of ſo frivolous a diſpute, and which admits ſo eaſy a deciſion, would go near to perſuade one, if, as Shakeſpear ſpeaks, *they had not the privilege of antiquity upon them*, that the pens of the antient *literati* were not always more wiſely employed, than thoſe of modern controverſialiſts. If we aſk the reaſon, it would ſeem to be owing to that ambitious ſpirit of ſubtlety and refinement, which, as Quinctilian obſerves, *puts men upon teaching not what they believe to be true, but what, from the falſhood or apparent ſtrangeneſs of the matter, they expect the praiſe of ingenuity from being able to maintain.* This, I ſay, might ſeem to be the cauſe of ſo much perverſity, on the firſt view, and unqueſtionably it had its influence. But the truth is, the real cauſe was ſomething more general and extenſive. It was, in fact, that *natural proneneſs*, ſo Longinus terms it, *in mankind, to cenſure and degrade things preſent*, ἴδιον ἀνθρώπῳ καταμέμφεσθαι τὰ παρόντα. This in nothing holds truer, than in what concerns the ſtate of literature; as may be ſeen from that unwearied induſtry of the learned to decry whatever appears to be the prevailing taſte of the times; whether it be in ſuggeſting ſome defect to be made good by future improvements; or, as is more common, becauſe the eaſier and leſs invidious taſk, in ſetting up, and magnifying ſome former examples of a different caſt and merit. Thus, in the caſe before us, exquiſite art and commanding genius, being the two only means of riſing to ſuperior literary excellence, in proportion as any age became noted for the one, it was conſtantly defamed,

and

and the preference given to the other. So, during the growth of letters in any ſtate, when a ſublimity of ſentiment and ſtrength of expreſſion, make, as, under thoſe circumſtances, they always will, the characteriſtic of the times, the critic, diſguſted with the rude workings of nature, affects to admire only the nicer finiſhings and proportions of art. When, let but the growing experience of a few years, refine and perfect the public taſte, and what was before traduced as roughneſs and barbarity, becomes at once nerves, dignity, and force. Then art, is effeminacy; and judgment, want of ſpirit. All now is rapture and inſpiration. The exacteſt modern compoſitions are unmanly and unnatural, *et ſolos veteres legendos putant, neque in ullis aliis eſſe naturalem eloquentiam et robur viris dignum arbitrantur* [Quinct. L. x c. 1.] The truth of this obſervation might be juſtified from many examples. The learning and art of *Pacuvius* (for ſo I underſtand the epithet *doctus*) carried it before the ſublime of *Accius*; juſt as in elder Greece the ſmooth and correct *Simonides*, *tenuis Simonides*, as Quinctilian characterizes him, bore away the prize from the lofty, and high-ſpirited *Æſchylus*. Afterwards indeed the caſe was altered. The Athenians, grown exact in the rules of good writing, became ſo enamoured of the bold flights of Æſchylus, as with a little correction to admit him on the ſtage, who, by this means, frequently gained the prize from a polite, and knowing people, for what had certainly loſt it him in the ſimpler, and leſs informed theatre of his own times. Thus too it fared with the elder Latin poets, who, though admired indeed in their own age, but with conſiderable abatement from the reaſon before aſſigned, were perfectly idolized in that of Auguſtus; ſo as to require the ſharpeſt ſatire of our poet, to detect and expoſe the malevolent principle, from whence the affectation aroſe. But the obſervation holds of our own writers. There was a time, when the art of JOHNSON was ſet above the divineſt raptures of SHAKESPEARE. The preſent age is well convinced of the miſtake. And now the genius of SHAKESPEARE is idolized in its turn. Happily for the public taſte, it can ſcarcely be too much ſo. Yet, ſhould any, in the rage

of erecting trophies to the genius of antient poeſy, preſume to violate the recent honours of more correct poets, the cauſe of ſuch critical perverſity will be ever the ſame. For all admiration of paſt times, when exceſſive, is ſtill to be accounted for the ſame way,

Ingeniis non ille favet plauditque ſepultis,
Noſtra ſed impugnat, nos noſtraque lividus odit.

410. ALTERIUS SIC ALTERA POSCIT OPEM RES ET CONJURAT AMICE.] This concluſion, "that art "and nature muſt conſpire to the production of a per-"fect piece" is, in the general, unqueſtionably juſt. If we would know the diſtinct powers and provinces of each, a fine paſſage in Longinus will inform us. For, of the five ſources of the ſublime, enumerated by that critic, two only "a grandeur of conception, and the pathetic" come from *nature:* the reſt, "a juſt arrangement of fi-"gures," "a ſplendid diction" and "dignity of com-"poſition," are of the province of *art.* Yet, tho' their powers are thus diſtinct, each, in order to attain its due perfection, muſt conſpire, and be conſociated, with the other. For that "ſublime of conception" and "pathetic "enthuſiaſm" never make a more ſure and laſting impreſſion, then when cloathed in the graces, and moderated by the ſober ſenſe of *art:* as, on the contrary, the milder beauties of "language" and "artificial compoſition" are never ſo ſecure of ſeizing the attention, as when raiſed and inſpirited by the invigorating influence of the *pathos*, or *ſublime.* So that the nature of the union, here recommended, is ſuch, as makes it not only neceſſary to the completion of that great end, *viz.* the glory of perfect compoſition; but that either part, in the alliance, may fully effect its own. All which is but the larger explication of another paſſage in Longinus, who teaches, that τότε ἡ τέχνη τέλειον, ἡνίκ' ἂν φύσις εἶναι δοκῇ· ἡ δ' ἂν φύσις ἐπιτυχὴς, ὅταν λανθάνουσα περιέχῃ τὴν τέχνην. [περ. υψ. τμη. κϛ.]

420. ADSENTATORES JUBET AD LUCRUM IRE POETA DIVES AGRIS, DIVES POSITIS IN FOENORE NUMMIS.] The truth of this juſt ſatire was never exemplified more pleaſantly, than in the caſe of good Queen

ELIZA-

ELIZABETH, to whoſe poetical ſupremacy, a certain critic of that time, who had written a treatiſe concerning the *art of Engliſh poeſie*, pays the following unſparing tribute. After a particular enumeration of the choice ſpirits of that age, *but laſt in recital*, ſays he, *and firſt in degree is the Queen, our ſovereign Lady, whoſe learned, delicate, noble muſe eaſily ſurmounteth all the reſt, that have written before her time or ſince, for ſenſe, ſweetneſſe, and ſubtillitie, be it in ode, elegie, epigram, or any other kind of poeme, heroicke or lyricke, wherein it ſhall pleaſe her Majeſtie to employ her penne, even by as much oddes, as her own excellent eſtate and degree exceedeth all the reſt of her moſt humble vaſſals.* But the excellent character of this great princeſs, and the obſcurity of her anonymous encomiaſt, may, perhaps, render the extravagance of this flattery leſs offenſive. One cannot however, without a mixture of pity and indignation, ſee a ſpirit of the higheſt rank in the next reign, deſcending to the meanneſs of proſtituting his praiſes ſtill more unworthily. The perſon I mean is B. JOHNSON, who hath addreſſed the following epigram to KING JAMES.

TO KING JAMES.

How, beſt of Kings, doſt thou a ſcepter beare!
How, beſt of Poets, doſt thou laurell weare!
But two things rare the FATES had in their ſtore,
And gave thee both, to ſhew they could no more.
For ſuch a POET, while thy daies were greene,
Thou wert, as chiefe of them are ſaid t'have been.
And ſuch a PRINCE thou art we daily ſee,
As chiefe of thoſe ſtill promiſe they will bee.
Whom ſhould my Muſe then flie to, but the beſt
Of Kings for Grace; of Poets for my teſt!

475. QUEM VERO ARRIPUIT, &c.] *I adviſe you*, ſays Cervantes, *that, being a poet, you may be famous, if you govern yourſelf by other mens judgments, more than by your own; for you have no parents, that diſlike their own children, fair or foul, and this error is more frequent in mens underſtandings.* Or, take a graver authority, *In hoc genere neſcio quo pacto magis quam in aliis ſuum cuique pulchrum eſt. Adhuc neminem cognovi poetam (et mihi fuit*

cum

cum Aquinio amicitia) *qui ſibi non optumus videretur.* [Cic. Tuſc. Diſp L. v. c. 22.] From this exceſſive vanity, ſo conſtant to the *kind*, naturally ſprings the rage of reciting in bad poets; who have, on that account, rendered themſelves the contempt of the ſober part of mankind, and, what is harder ſtill, the jeſt of the wits, their more ſucceſsful brethren. Horace, in the place before us, may be thought to have puſhed his ridicule on them to an invidious extreme. But the following known ſtory of the French *Du Perrier* will ſhew it to be ſufficiently modeſt. This gentleman had acquired ſome reputation for Latin verſe. But not knowing (as ſuch writers ſeldom do) his proper province, he choſe afterwards to exchange it for the French poeſy; in which he propoſed to himſelf to write upon the model of the famous *Malherbe*. Here he was not ſo ſucceſsful. Yet his induſtry deſerves to be noted. For, when now the public failed him in their wonted returns of praiſe, he would needs try to keep up his old ſtock, by *drawing* on his friends. It was the fortune of M. Deſpreaux to ſtand within the reach of this alarming appellation. As they were, one day, at church together, Du Perrier did nothing but talk to him of an Ode, he had lately preſented to the French academy, for the prize of the former year; complaining heavily of the flagrant injuſtice done him, in adjudging that diſtinction to another. Scarce could he contain himſelf for a moment, during the elevation; but, applying himſelf to the ear of M. Deſpreaux, whiſpered him in a tone, which was never meant to convey a ſecret. "They "have given it out, ſays he, that my verſes were too Mal-"herbian." A *trait* like this was in no danger of being thrown away on the obſervant ſatyriſt; whom it accordingly furniſhed with one of the pleaſanteſt ſtrokes of ridicule in all his writings. Speaking of ſuch intrepid perſecuting rhymers, he adds, in expreſs alluſion, as we are told, to this fact,

IL N'EST TEMPLE SI SAINT, DES ANGES RESPECTE',
QUI SOIT CONTRE SA MUSE UN LIEU DE SURETE'.

A. P.

FINIS.